

I. Introduction to Zechariah and its Historical Context

If you have your Bible this morning, let us turn back to the book of Zechariah. We are almost out of the Old Testament, and as you know, we have been working our way through the Old Testament, looking at each book of the Bible and focusing on how Christ is portrayed in that book.

The book today really fits into the book we did last week, and of course, the book we are going to do next week. Last week we did Haggai, this week we are doing Zechariah, and next week we are going to do Malachi. All three of those books go together.

On Thursday night, we have been coming through, talking about outlining each book for the first 10 or 15 minutes, and we talked about Ezra and Nehemiah. All of these books go together. The time period of Ezra and Nehemiah takes place, just so you have this straight in your mind and get it in your Bible, after the 70 years of captivity. The Jews go back to the land and they begin to rebuild the temple in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Then we saw last week when we got into the book of Haggai that they had quit building the temple. They stopped building it. Haggai really comes down on them. He really comes after them about not getting the temple done, and we will talk about that here in a moment. This book, Zechariah, does the same thing. Malachi is another prophet who does the same thing.

In other words, these three prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—fit into this time period of Ezra and Nehemiah. They are the prophets that come to Jerusalem. They are contemporaries. During this time period, they both write concerning the finishing of the temple.

II. Doctrinal Significance of Zechariah

Doctrinally, let me say this so we get this down here: Zechariah is, I think, probably the definitive book in the Old Testament on the second coming of Christ. The book of Zechariah is an incredible book. Not only does it lend itself historically to the timeframe of the Jews, but you are going to see this morning that there are some great practical things in here for your life and my life.

Doctrinally, this book, prophetically, is without a doubt probably the greatest book in the Old Testament on the second coming of Christ and the events that follow. Those events would be the second coming, then the millennium, and then the tribulation before that. It is really a great book. I am going to show you some things before we move into the practical side of it.

We are big here on you learning your Bible. Most people look at the Bible and they look at it as a hard book to understand. I think many times God's people are defeated when it comes to the Bible just by looking at it because it looks impossible. When you start to read it, I have found all my life that God's people have the best intent. They start to read the Bible. They want to know the Bible, but unfortunately, you do not learn the Bible just by sitting down and reading.

Every time I lead somebody to Christ, they will ask me, "Where should I start reading in the Bible?" I have had people who have come over and really wanted to get into the Bible, and they always ask me, "What book should I start reading in the Bible?" I always appreciate that, and I always send them off to John someplace. It is an easy book to follow the events.

I will tell you why I do that. You do not learn the Bible by sitting down and reading it. Most of God's people that wound up back in the world or wound up out of fellowship with God, at one time many of them were people who wanted to learn the Bible. They began to read the Bible, but they could not figure out what they were reading. They had no idea what the context was, or the time period was. They did not know who was writing to whom. They certainly could not find anything that really meant something to them. So they struggled going through the Bible, just trying to put it all together and learning the Word of God. Of course, that is not the mode that God wanted you to learn the Bible.

III. The Principle of Learning Fundamentals

Years ago, many, many years ago, I used to play the trumpet. I played the trumpet for most of my young life in high school. I started in junior high and all up through high school and in my adult life, up to probably 15 or 20 years ago, I just did not have time to keep up with it. But there was a time in my life where I studied with probably one of the greatest trumpet players in the country. He was not a jazz guy or a, but he was more of a classical type of guy.

This guy was known for taking people who had somewhat ability with the trumpet and turning out some great state champions and teaching them how to play. I will never forget, my first time over there that I went to meet him, I was really expecting, I do not even know what I was expecting, certainly more than what I found when I got there. He had a beautiful addition onto his home that was all soundproof and it was acoustically perfect for practicing. He played with the Canton Symphony and he was a great trumpet player. He could just about do anything.

I will never forget, when we first met, he gave me a book and he said, "This is going to be the book that we really work with." I looked at it and it was about a book that size, and the name of the book was The Talking Trumpet. It had this little stick figure guy with a trumpet for a hat. I looked at it and I thought to myself, "This guy is the greatest trumpeter in the world and he teaches all these guys." I looked at the book and I did not understand what he was doing. I still have the book someplace, and it was simply called The Talking Trumpet.

What it was, it was the fundamentals of basic, his approach was this: If you could learn the basic fundamentals of playing each note the exact same way with the exact same pitch, with the exact same fervor, then you can take those individual notes and put them together. Once you learn how to play each one separately the exact right way, his teaching was that musicians need to always focus on each note, each thing they play. Do not look at the whole music, look at each note. When it is ingrained in your mind exactly how those notes are supposed to be and you play each one that way, it does not matter what configuration they are in.

So he started out with all of the basics. I still remember all of those scales, just basic scales. It was not, "Did you hit all the notes right?" It was not the fact that, "Did they sound okay?" It was

in his mind, "These notes should all sound the same even though they are different notes. They should be the same length, you should not cut one off." He was a stickler on that.

Years later I saw the value in that when I got into the Bible. I must confess to you, he and I did not last very long together. I was not the disciplined person that he was looking for, and I had my own way of doing things, and it was not his way. He was a very nice guy, but after about a year and a half of it, one night he just said, "I think I have done all for you that I can do." I could appreciate that.

But years later I looked back on that and that little stupid book called *The Talking Trumpet* that basically fundamentally just took each note and just focused on the absolutely fundamental basics of playing music. If you can master those, then it does not matter what configuration you find them in because you will play it all the same as far as your technique. Many years later I looked and thought to myself, "That is exactly the way the Bible is." You have got to learn the basic fundamentals of the Bible. You have got to learn the basic technique of how everything in the Bible simply lays itself out.

The great music piece that is called *The Carnival of Venice*, it is incredible. It all comes down to just understanding the fundamentals. For years later I looked at the Bible just like he looked at *The Talking Trumpet*, turning out people who really know the Bible just like he turned out guys who could really play the trumpet because they focused on hitting the fundamentals right every time. That is really the way the Bible is.

Your Bible looks complicated, but in your New Testament, you realize that if you wanted to learn the New Testament, I could get you well on the way in a month's time of really getting a handle on the New Testament if you just followed a basic little fundamental concept. The New Testament, as complicated as it looks, is basically broken down around seven concepts. Just like the verse, "Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do." The Bible is broken down on seven basic fundamental principles in the New Testament that if you learn them, then you start putting them together. Just like when you learn the notes, you could put them any way you wanted to do it. Once you learn the seven basic fundamentals of the New Testament, then you are able to put them together and figure out the whole thing.

Now the Old Testament has seven also. Once you learn these seven, for instance, in the New Testament, the first one would be the church age. The second one would be the rapture. The third one would be the tribulation period. The fourth one would be the judgment seat of Christ. The fifth one would be the marriage of the Lamb. The sixth one would be the second coming of Christ. And the seventh one will be the millennial reign of Christ.

You talk about those seven things and wow. But if you realize not only what they are, but memorize the order that they happen in, you have got the New Testament. Just like that old boy wanted me to become a great trumpet player by focusing on the fundamentals of music and getting the fundamentals down that produced a great trumpet player, I am telling you, I want you to know your Bible. I want you to have a handle on the Word of God and know the Word of God, but it starts with the basic fundamentals of being able to know what order these come in, know how to define each one of them, and then bolt them back together.

I told you the story that I learned again about the Bible, watching the History Channel one night. It was a story about how that in World War II, most people do not know this, in the early part of World War II, the Germans were right off the coast of the East Coast of the United States. Their U-boats would stay off and we did not have blackouts back then, and they could actually, so close, they could hear the music coming out of New York City and the lights along the skyline would light up any ships going back and forth. We were not officially in the war yet. This was like 1940, 1941, before Pearl Harbor. They would sink American ships coming up and down the East Coast. They were sinking them left and right.

America, when we got into the war, the U-boats had a great advantage. They had got down the technique and they were sinking our ships faster than we could produce them. So what happened was, somebody came up with the idea. In early World War II, it took about two years to build a ship from keel right up to the finished thing to launch it. By the end of World War II, they were turning out a new ship every 30 days. The process that made that happen was the fact that somebody got the idea, instead of just laying a keel and then going to work, putting it all together, whatever ship you were going to build all over this country, they were making compartments. The compartments were all ready to go. They had all the wires in them, they had everything in them they needed to do. They were done all over the country and then they were shipped to this yard. When they laid the keel, all they did was lay the sections down, weld them in and then wire them up. Now instead of taking two years to build a ship, they were turning out ships, I think the fastest one came out in like 32 days. All because somebody came up with an idea of building the ships componently.

That is the way I teach you the Bible. You want to learn the Bible quickly? You want to get to the place where you are really being able to grasp the concepts of the Bible? Follow that basic little plan. Follow that thing where you learn the seven components of the New Testament. You understand each one of them. You realize some material, you do not need to know it all, enough to get an understandable thing of what is going on with it. You move on to the next one, then the next one, and then pretty soon when you are done with it all, if you took one a month, you could probably do two a month as smart as some of you are, but if you took one a month and just focused on that one, and then at the end of seven months, you can look back and now you could take those seven components and then you could string it together, bolt them together just like that ship and have a complete understanding of how it all works. That is exactly the way the Bible is. Then you do the same thing with the Old Testament.

Now Zechariah, the book of Zechariah, chapters 12, 13, and 14, are the greatest chapters in the Old Testament that bolt up to this idea of the second coming of Christ and the millennium. As I said, there are seven things that the New Testament is built around that if you just learn these seven things, you do not have to learn everything in the Bible starting out, just focus on these seven things. Then in time, you take these seven things and you develop each one of them.

Now the church, I gave you as one, right? But the church has seven periods in it, so you have got to look at that. The rapture has three sections to it. The tribulation has two sections to it. So some of these break down into subcomponents, but all you have got to do to get a good handle on things in the Bible is just know the order of the events and the way that they play out, and then

you learn them. What do we do on Sunday morning and Thursday night? We add to that. That is the same format by which I do everything in the Bible, and we are just constantly adding more information. If you in your mind and your Bible can systematically divide those things out, when I come to the book of Zechariah and start talking about the second coming of Christ, it becomes pretty easy.

Chapter 14 of the book of Zechariah, we are going to look at some of it here in just a moment, it will be your definitive passage in the Old Testament on the second coming of Christ. Your definitive passage in the New Testament will be Revelation 19 and 20.

IV. The Consistency of Bible Prophecy: The King's Highway

Let me show you how this works. Let me give you a basic example. This will get you ready for next week, because next week we will get into Malachi. I know we have had a lot of good stuff, a lot of practical stuff coming through these books, and I focused on that aspect of it, but look at what I am about to lay out for you as a little introduction to next week, because next week we are going down where the whales live. You have had enough milk, now you are going to get some meat. We get into the book of Malachi, we are going to talk about some things that will hopefully put a lot of things together for you.

It is things like I am about to show you in the Bible that are the crucial things that in time you have to learn. For instance, do you know in your Bible that there are two places? There are two places in your Bible, and you probably have read this before, but they are so far apart you probably never made a correlation. That is one of the things that I try to instill in you about the Bible is to always be aware of your surroundings of what you are reading.

You realize there are two places in your Bible. The first one is found in Exodus 3:5. In Exodus 3:5, somebody is told to take their shoes off their feet. That sounds like a simple thing, does it not? Then he adds to it that the reason why they are supposed to take the shoes off their feet is because the ground that they are standing on is holy ground.

Exodus 3:5

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Then you come over to the book of Joshua, and then again in the book of Joshua, you find there in Joshua 5:15, after Joshua comes over Jordan and comes into Jerusalem, and he is right there, if you study the passage, he is standing on the Mount of Olives. It is not called the Mount of Olives yet, but that is where he is at. Here, Joshua has a confrontation with the angel of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ in an Old Testament appearance, and a second time, God tells somebody to take their shoes off their feet, that the ground they are standing on is holy ground.

Joshua 5:15

And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

When you look at those two places, you would not think anything about it unless you are focused on what you are reading in the Bible. Because what you have there in the two places, the first place back there in Exodus, Moses is on Mount Sinai. The last place was Joshua, Joshua is on the Mount of Olives. If you want to look at that and investigate a little bit farther, you find that is the exact route from when the children of Israel come out of Egypt and they get the law on Mount Sinai, which is also called Mount Horeb in the Bible. You will find that they are interchangeable, so you want to remember that.

Then that route, that arc, goes up a specific route up through the Promised Land that they finally go into the Promised Land. So you find the first place, Moses is told to take his shoes off his feet, that is Mount Sinai. The second place, Joshua was told to take the shoes off his feet, that is the Mount of Olives. That is the route of the ark. You have the route typified by the ark of the covenant that Jesus Christ is going to take when He comes back at the second coming of Christ.

If you take it a little bit farther, you will find that route, if you want to get a little more into it, falls under the category of probably one of the greatest single things about the Bible you always want to remember, and that is Bible consistency. The Bible is always consistent. Wherever you find somebody taking their shoes off here, somebody taking their shoes off here or something, anything, there will always be a connection between the two. We may not be able to see the connection, it may take a lot of study to find a connection, but I guarantee you there will be a connection.

This taking off of the shoes from Horeb and then on the Mount of Olives, this marks the beginning and the end of the route of the ark of the covenant as through their wilderness journey that is laid out back there in Exodus and Deuteronomy. This is the exact same route that Christ is going to take when He comes back at the second coming of Christ.

You say, "How does this fit into the book of Zechariah?" Thought you would never ask. Let me show you how this thing progresses through. We start back in Exodus 3:15, and back there in Exodus 3:15, we find Moses on Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb. Then in Deuteronomy 33:1-2, we find the prophetic verse talking about that the Lord comes from Zion, and the context is the second coming.

Deuteronomy 33:1-2

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Psalms 68:1-9, again, the context is still the second coming. We find where the Bible comes out of Sinai or the Lord comes out of Sinai and He comes up through the wilderness, just like they

did in the Old Testament. In Song of Solomon 3:6, we find that the Lord Jesus Christ at the second coming context, He is now coming out of the wilderness.

Song of Solomon 3:6

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

In Judges 5:1-5, the Bible talks about, and the passage here is unquestionably the second coming of Christ. It talks about the Lord marching from Seir to Edom.

Judges 5:1-5

Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

In Isaiah 63:1, it talks about Him going from Edom to Bozrah.

Isaiah 63:1

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

In Habakkuk 3:3, which was last week, he talks about coming from Bozrah, from Mount Paran to Teman.

Habakkuk 3:3

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

Now, Judges 5, Isaiah 63, and Habakkuk 3 are all places that you could go and find on a map. Those places are called back in the Old Testament in Numbers 20 and Numbers 21, those places are called the King's Highway. That is why it is called the King's Highway, because that is the highway the King comes up when He comes back at the second coming of Christ, that is why. Incredible stuff.

So you come up through Deuteronomy, Psalms 68, Song of Solomon, Judges, Isaiah, Habakkuk. Then finally it comes to the finish line in Zechariah 14. Let us read Zechariah 14 down here in a couple of verses and then you will see how this begins to come together.

V. Zechariah 14 and the Second Coming

Zechariah 14:1-9

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

The first thing I want you to see here, and I will just make a few references as we go down through here, look at verse 2. If you are living in the 21st century as I am and you are looking around and you are aware of anything at all, you would know that the time period that we are living in is pretty precarious. The Middle East is like a boiling point, ready to overwhelm everything. There is no peace on the earth. I know we like to pretend that Christmas is "peace on earth, goodwill toward men," but there is no peace on earth and they are going to try to kill all men on earth. That is just the way it is. I do not care where you go. There is no safe place on this planet. The only safe place is to be in Christ Jesus and be a Christian and know that He has your back.

There is coming a time, as this thing develops even farther. Right now the nation of Israel only has two friends on all the planet earth, only two friends. The United Nations is against them, all the nations of this earth are against them. There are only two nations that take any kind of positive political approach to the nation of Israel. One of them is England and the other one is the United States. That makes us feel good if you know your Bible, but I have some bad news for

you if you look at verse 2, because verse 2 says, at this time, all the nations go against the Jew. That includes America and England.

I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I would say probably in the next four or five years, if the Lord does not pull us out before it all happens, I think that you will probably see England, who has already got her own problems she cannot control, I think you will probably see England fall into the influence of the Muslims. I think that the pressure of them being everywhere and doing what they are doing, it will be easier. It will be easier for people who have lost their Bible. It will be easier if the terrorists tell you, "As long as you are supporting Israel, we are going to blow up your people." It would be a lot easier just to say, "What is the big deal with that? Okay, we will not be an Israel friend anymore. Now leave us alone." That is where it is going today. That is where it will go at some point in America.

You say, "How do you know that?" Well, verse 2, if you can read, says, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem." Clear and simple. "To battle and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled and the women ravished and half the city shall go forth into captivity and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

"Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle." I have had over the years people say, "Now what is the day of battle?" That will be Joshua 10:14. That is the reference to the battle in Joshua. That was the battle back there. So that also tells you that the book of Joshua, many of the things in Joshua, is a picture of the second coming, which it is.

Now here we come, verse 4. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." That is where Joshua was standing when he met the Lord back there. When Joshua crosses over in the book of Joshua 5 and he comes up, he comes standing on the Mount of Olives. He is right on the same spot. So that is why the Lord tells him, "Take off your shoes for the ground you are standing on is holy." When Moses was back on Mount Horeb and Sinai, he is standing on the exact same spot where the Lord is going to touch down when He comes back.

Then He comes up through the wilderness, up through the King's Highway, crosses over Jordan exactly where the ark did, exactly where the 12 tribes did. That is why they put the stones down there for memorial if you cannot figure it out. Then He comes right across the Jordan, right onto the Mount of Olives. When the Lord comes back, He rides that white horse down from Mount Sinai up through the King's Highway. He comes off there on the Mount of Olives. He steps off that horse and the Mount of Olives cleaves asunder. It is a picture of the second coming of Christ.

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west. And there shall be a very great valley and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south. And he shall flee to the valley of the mountains and the valley of the mountain shall reach onto Azal. Yea, he shall flee as it fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah. And the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee," that is you and me.

"And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day or night, but it shall come to pass that at evening it shall be light. And it shall be that day that living water shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea," that would be the Dead Sea, "and half of them toward the hinder sea," that would be the Mediterranean, "in the summer and the winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth in that day shall one Lord and his name be one."

That is the picture of the Lord coming back. To put the whole thing together, there is going to be a temple rebuilt in Jerusalem and that temple is built during the millennium. When the Lord comes back, He comes back to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is on the east side of Jerusalem. Right next to the Mount of Olives, if you looked over this way, you would find the Eastern Gate.

We have all heard many, many songs that say, "I will meet you in the morning, I will meet you in the morning, right inside the Eastern Gate." Most people do not understand the significance of the Eastern Gate. The Eastern Gate is the gate on the east side facing the Mount of Olives. That is where when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back, He is going to step off that horse, the mounds are going to cleave asunder, He is going to walk through that Eastern Gate. The Bible says in Ezekiel 43 and 44, that He goes in and He sits down on the throne in Jerusalem and that is where He is crowned, Revelation 19, King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. It is all built around the Mount of Olives and the Eastern Gate.

Just for a little historical significance, it was back around 1543 that the Turks, who were Muslim, had Jerusalem. One of the great leaders of the Turks back then was a guy named Suleiman. He was called Suleiman the Magnificent. Suleiman, as all Muslims, did not believe that Jesus Christ was God. He believed that Muhammad was God and took the place of Jesus Christ. He cared nothing for Christianity in any way, shape or form. In fact, they had just finished the Crusades and he was no friend to Christianity in any way, shape or form.

Suleiman, who denied the Bible, denied the visible return of Christ and everything to do with Jesus Christ because he is caught up in Muhammad and Allah and all that stuff, he fancied himself as a great prophet in Islam. So he had the idea because he knew the prophecy. He knew that someday Jesus Christ was going to walk through that Eastern Gate when He touched down on the Mount of Olives. He knew that. He was going to be crowned King of Jerusalem.

He had just defeated the Roman Catholics and he had defeated all the Westerners and now he is Supreme Lord in Jerusalem. So, pride coming before fall, he puffs himself up to the point, being Muslim and denying everything in the Bible. He thinks that that prophecy is about him. So he makes a decree to his people that tomorrow morning, "I am going to walk through that. Now that I have taken Jerusalem, I am going to walk through that Eastern Gate and I am going to sit down and I am going to declare myself as the great ruler and the savior of Israel for the Muslims and for Allah."

Well, things did not go as planned. That night, and I was not there, so all I have got is what the record says, he had a terrible dream. The dream must have been so real, it must have been real, whatever it was, and we probably do not have all the details, but he had a dream that night that

he walked through that Eastern Gate. He dreamed that God killed him, dead as a doornail on the other side of that gate. It must have been real because he was so afraid at that point.

Not only did he not walk through that Eastern Gate, but he walled up that Eastern Gate with bricks. There is no man ever to that point. I guess he thought if he could not do it, he would wall it up so Jesus could not do it. So he walled up that Eastern Gate and if you would go to Jerusalem today and they would take you to where the Eastern Gate is in the Mount of Olives, you would find that right there, that gate is still walled up. Since 1540, it has been walled up by Suleiman because he wanted, if he knew he could not go in himself, he thought, actually thought, this shows you how stupid he was. They should have never called him Suleiman the Magnificent. They should have called him Suleiman the Stupid. Stupid in the sense that you think putting bricks and mortar in that gate is going to keep out my Lord and Savior. He is the one that made the rocks and the cement and the bricks. Of course to this day, it has been sealed up.

That Eastern Gate is a great concept. Right inside there today, if you would go over there, is the Dome of the Rock. The Dome of the Rock is the exact place that David bought the threshing floor back there when he wanted to make a sacrifice back in the Old Testament. That is where we get the great concept of a sacrifice where he wants to buy it, but the man says, "No, I am going to give it to you." And he said, "No, no, no, I want to buy it." And he said, "No, I am going to give it to you." David says, "I have to buy it because I am going to sacrifice there to the Lord. If I am going to sacrifice for God, then it must cost me something." By that little story, he defined what sacrifice is in the Bible.

Today, if you would go to Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock is where the Muslim Temple is. Right now there is a shrine there to Mohammed and Allah and called the Dome of the Rock. If you would walk in there, it is kind of like a big structure and there is a big rock right inside of it. That is called the Dome of the Rock. If you look at any pictures of Jerusalem, you will see this golden dome all with a rock in the old part of the city. That is exactly where the Muslims have it today. But all that is going to change, you see. When the Lord comes back, He is going to take that over. That is what it is talking about in Zechariah 12, 13, and particularly in 14.

It says in verse 9, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth in that day. There shall be one Lord and his name one." And His name is found in the book of Revelation 19. What follows on down the rest of the chapter is incredible details on the millennium and what is going to happen with the nations. It is great stuff. I give you that because this book, doctrinally, you need to know that. Because if you are ever going to study the Bible systematically and componently, these are the things you are going to have to get.

VI. The Temple as Your Body: Building Your Future

I want to focus for a few moments here on the great lessons for us found again. It is found in the historical side of things and then making the parallels. We talked last week in 1 Corinthians 10 about how that the Old Testament were for our examples. That is something you are. An example, that is something you do. Then the Bible says for admonition. So now we know that all

of this back here that we are reading in Zechariah, Haggai, next week in Malachi, obviously has some impact on our lives or it should.

We know now that the temple, when we are talking about the unfinished building of the temple, we know now that the temple in the New Testament aspect is your body and my body. We saw last week that where Israel began to build the physical temple and then they stopped, it is a picture of you and me getting saved, beginning to build our spiritual temple. "Know ye not your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" And then at some point giving up and stopping.

Haggai, he goes after them a little hard. He goes after their attitude. He goes after the things that they are doing and not finishing the house. He talks about the fact that we talked about the four things: procrastination, they say it is not time yet, we saw that parallel. The sealed houses, taking the stuff for God's house and building their own. We saw that the things of life had become more important to them than the things of God. Then we talked about that great aspect of life being a bag with holes. At the end of your life you try to get all the things but they have nothing to do with God. You look back and you wonder why your life is so empty. You look in your bag for your 401k and all the stuff that you have got and all the stuff that you have hoarded. Then you realize that that stuff really does not satisfy you and it is empty. Bag with holes, great study.

But Zechariah comes at it from a different angle. I think it is something that each of us today should look at and consider in our own relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not going to be a hard message today. This is going to be a message that I am going to try to preach like I think Zechariah laid it out to the people. He did something that all preaching should do, but he went after their heart. He really did not clobber them for what they did or did not do. He tried to reason with them, appeal to their heart. Much like I do every week and every Thursday. I think the best preaching is preaching that is aimed at the heart.

He talks about the fact that they must have a completed temple before the Lord can come back. He talks about the temple of God and its building, it is simply not an option. He simply said, "Look guys, if the Lord is ever going to come back and you are believing this stuff about a Messiah and you believe that there is a God, then you have got to know very clearly from the Old Testament, from our Bible, from our scriptures, that this temple has to be, it has to be finished. Not finishing it is not an option."

He tries to get them to see and understand, I think probably one of the greatest truths that also is true in your life and my life. What does he tip them to try to see? He tried to get them to see that they are not just building a building. I think sometimes we lose the purpose of coming to church. I know Christians have been saved for a long time and maybe they are in churches that do not keep the fire built under them. It is easy to follow that lethargic mindset. I think that many, many of God's people go to church every week, but that means absolutely nothing as far as doing anything with it. Going to church does not make you a viable Christian. It is doing something with what you get, your purpose in going to church.

I think that he hits on something that is so true in your life and my life. I know that in our church, we have got a lot of little fireballs that just got saved and some of you have been saved for four or five years. Very frankly, you have not got over it. I hope you never do. I have been saved since

1972. That is when I claim my spiritual birthday. I probably was saved when I was five years old, but I did not know what I was doing back then, but I knew what I was doing in 1972.

I have a message I preach out of 1 John 5:11-13, probably the greatest verses in the Bible about salvation. I tell the story how that I was supposedly saved when I was five. I remember going down the front. I remember the lady, she probably died about 10 years ago. I used to see her in the choir all the time. I remember the lady that dealt with me. I remember her opening up her Bible and her verses were underlined in red. But I do not know if I really understood what she was talking about. I was five years old at that point. I cried because everybody else was crying. Why not? My sister went down, got saved first, and then I remember my mom saying, "Would you like to get saved?" Why not? It looked like it was going to work out good for her. I did not want to miss out on this. So I do not really know at that point.

Then I got out of fellowship with God. My mom and dad got mad at the preacher about something when I was about five, six, or seven. So they quit going to church. They still sent me to church. After a while, I did not want to go anymore. Pretty soon, I was just out in the world with everybody else. It was not until the events in my life, after I got out of the army, that God turned my life around and I saw the need. I remember, I struggled for about three or four months. Every time I would try to do something in the Bible, I would try to get something done for God, I would screw up, I would do something stupid, and the old devil would just beat me up. He would say things like, "You see, you are not saved." And I would say, "Yeah, I am saved." And he said, "Really, when were you saved?" And I said, "Well, back..." He said, "You do not know what was going on back then. What are you talking about?" He would always get me on this. He would say, "Well, if you are really saved, how come you did what you did?" And I did not have an answer.

I lived by myself, my mom remarried, and I was living by myself in our home. I remember one night I was reading my Bible coming through there, and it was about two o'clock in the morning. I had been struggling for a long time, all day with this thing. God, at the right time and the right place, had me come through 1 John 5:11-13.

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

When I read that last part of that verse, it just hit me like a bolt of thunder. It just kicked me out of the bed. The dog was sleeping with me back then, that was an old beagle I had, and he went flop, flop, flop upside down, and he did not know what happened. I jumped out of bed and I said, "I can know! I can know! I do not have to put up with it!" Right then I got on my knees, and this is what I said: "Lord, I want to do what is right, I love you to death. I know my life is a screwed up mess, and I want to give it to you, and I want to do whatever you want me to do, but this thing is killing me. I do not know what I did when I was five years old. I really do not know. I do not

know if I did, I do not know if I did, and this thing has beaten me to death. So Lord, right now, based on what that verse says, and you know I already believe, and I do not have to go through all the things the Romans wrote, I have led other people to Christ. I know those things, but right now, if I am not saved, save me." I got up off my knees and I never doubted that thing again.

I have been asked many, many times after I preached that sermon, told that story, somebody would come up and say, "Well, do you think, now that you are past that, and that is some 40-some years ago, you look back on that, do you think you were saved then, or you were saved when you were five?" I do not know. All I know is, I got it now. That is all that matters.

I think so many times we miss the point that he is trying to get across to these people. "Hey, you are not just building a building. Going to church is not just, 'Oh, I am going to church.'" Most people go to church with no purpose to go to church. They have no desire. They go because they are supposed to go. They go because they know the preacher will come looking for them if they are not there. They know that mom and dad will give them a bad time, or somebody will say, they will get five phone calls, "Where were you?" So they go, but there is no purpose and there is no reason. Why? Because you were just like the people back there in Zechariah's day. Zechariah does not clobber them. He just simply says, "Hey, look, you have got to get this temple finished before the Lord is coming back." I say to you this morning, with all the same scope, you have got to get your house in order before the Lord comes back. It is just that simple.

Then he goes on and he says, "You are not building a building. You are not building some spiritual edifice here." He says, "You guys need to understand that this temple is just not a building." Remember now, we talked last week that the temple of God was a central part of everything that Israel had to do with God, past, present, or future. What he is saying here is, "Hey boys, get it together. You are not just building a building. You are building your future."

I say to you this morning, you are not just building your body. You are not just building some spiritual body to go to church. You are building your future because you must have your spiritual temple finished, completed before He comes back. He appeals to their heart. It is just not an option. It is not some religious symbol. It is not some religious building, but rather you are building the future of you and your family and your children.

VII. The Importance of God's Heritage and Family

I do not know of any greater insurance policy for your kids, for your family, or even for this nation, than building that temple. Do you ever notice in the Bible, and I have, over the years, kind of built into myself that I kind of red flag things when I see them in the Bible. You ever notice how much time God spends on writing about genealogies in the Bible? Genealogies are the list of people that are in generations of families. You ever notice how many times He spends time talking about families in the Bible?

You do not go 10 chapters in Genesis, and He takes the whole chapter 10, and He talks about the family of Shem, the family of Ham, and the family of Japheth. You ever notice, you ever look at Matthew 1, the genealogy of the line of Christ through the kings is on, and it goes all the way

back. How about Luke 3? There is the genealogy of Christ, and it goes all the way back to Adam. You could trace the whole family tree.

I remember when we came through Chronicles and Kings, and I laid out 1 Chronicles for you, and I showed you how that the first eight chapters in 1 Chronicles is nothing but David's family record, showing you over and over that he is in the right line. Why does God spend so much time in the Bible with genealogies, families, and laying that thing out? I will tell you why.

Psalms 127:3

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

We hear a lot of verses, and we do not make the right connection. That verse does not say that children are your heritage. I have seen people all the time, and I hear them talk about it, they will talk about your children are your heritage. They are not your heritage. That verse says that your children are God's heritage. What does that mean? What does that consist of? Your children are not your heritage, they are God's heritage.

What you have in the Bible is the power of an unbroken line of family coming down through the genealogies and the generations of producing men and women and the ongoing generations that carry on the Word of God and do everything that God wants them to do as a family. The key to the nation of Israel was a strong family. That is why people ask me all the time. If you are a young person here today, you ought to thank God that you live in the New Testament.

I deal with people all the time who, for years, have teenagers, when they get that golden age of 15 or 16, they think they know more about life than everybody on planet earth. You get a lot of rebellion that comes up with children. I am telling you right now, you have got to thank God you live in the New Testament. You get in the Old Testament and you sass mom and dad and do not be respectful to them, and they will try to work it out with you, and that does not work. Then the next step is to take you down to the elders, and the dad and the mom would say, "Hey, look, he has been disrespectful or she is being disrespectful. They are not doing what is right. They will not listen, and they are having all kinds of problems." The elders would try to talk to you, and if that did not work, and you told them, "Go take a long walk off a short pier," you know what they do? They dug a big hole for you, put you down in it, and everybody got a rock and they stoned you to death.

Now, that sounds pretty graphic, does it not? That sounds pretty extreme. But the principle is behind that. God knew that if you lost a family, if the family disintegrates, if mom and dad do not have some checks and balance systems on the kids, and you do not preserve the family, the nation of Israel as a nation was going to go to pieces. So He puts into those stringent rules, because God knows that if the family does not follow through and the generations do not produce the right generation based on what God has given them, there is going to be problems.

One of the biggest failures that Israel had, the reason why it marched for 40 years around before God took them in? He made the generation that came out of Egypt all die in the wilderness before He allowed them to go in. The only ones that went in were the children, who in the day of the 40 years wandering, did not do all the terrible things that Israel did. But the thing is, God has

to again give them, that is why you have got the book of Deuteronomy. You know what Deuteronomy means? It means deuterio. It means the second giving of the law. You know why Deuteronomy is the last book in those Moses section there of Genesis, the first five books in the Bible, because they cross over in Genesis, and God has to give them the law the second time. You know why? Because the parents did not give to their kids what God gave them the first time.

I personally believe that everything that you and I do in our personal lives, you should look at in the light of building your future. That is hard for us to do, because we are all living in now. I know we like to sing the song "In the Sweet By and By," but we all like living in the now, now, now. It is hard to keep a balance in the thing. I know it is. But I am telling you the power of an unbroken line of God's heritage, the family and the Bible is simply, as far as I am concerned, everything. Everything that comes into your life, every obstacle the devil throws at you, everything that happens because you make a bad choice, not based because you made choices, not based on biblical principles. As far as I am concerned, my own personal opinion, at the end of the day, is done for one reason: to screw up the line down in your generation that that solid line of Christ gets broken in your family.

I am telling you, the key to the nation of Israel was strong families. The key to the New Testament church is the strength of families. Your temple, just as Israel's temple, has to be complete when Christ returns. When you look at your children, you are looking at people that someday will take over your ministry, or should. Let me ask you a question. If you have a ministry, maybe you do not have one, so you do not have to worry about any kids taking it over. I do not know, but you should have one. When you pass off the scenes, who are you training up right now within your family to take over for you? That is looking ahead and understanding this great concept, that you are not just building a temple, you are not just building a building, you are building your future by what you do in your life with the Word of God.

Heritage for God continues. It is the same way in churches. Everything I do as a pastor has two applications to it. One of them will be the immediate application. I want you to be able to get what you need right now. My job is to help you. I tell you all the time, I do not care where you have been, what you have done, or where you are at. My job is to take you where you are at and help you get into it. Yet I understand that a lot of you have come in when your families from here on down have been in a mess and your genealogy going back is terrible, but then you get saved. You have the ability to change the rest of your future by ensuring that your children. I know that things happen in people's lives, things come up. There is never a time when God will not take you and help you to do what you need to do.

I always look not only at the immediate, but I look at the future, building the people that will ensure that this church, this work continues after I am gone as God's heritage. Because this church is also the heritage of God because it is made up of families. This is why families need to reproduce themselves in themselves with their children. Then on down the line, their children. It works down the line and therefore, it works through the church that the church as God's heritage and families as God's heritage and children as God's heritage always ensure that this work goes on. You think we buy new people? You think there is a catalog someplace that when you get old and die that we just buy new people to keep the thing going? You have to keep it going.

Why do you think I have such a passion for the Word of God and for people to try to get you? Why do you think I will spend whatever time it takes with anybody one-on-one in the Bible to develop whatever I may see in them? Because I understand and I gave you the great three point concept a long time ago that every Christian ought to do: look behind, look around and look ahead. You ought to have three perspectives. You ought to look behind and see where you have been. You ought to look where you are at right now and you have got to take heed of where you are going because you have to get that temple built.

Maybe some of this will help you, where I am coming from with some of this stuff. I look at people probably totally different than most pastors do. I look at people probably most totally different than most people do. Because I do not ever look at people with the issues they have. I know that they have issues and I have to deal with those issues. But I do not ever look at you with your problem and label you that that is you. I will never do that. I always allow you to define who you are yourself. I do not think it is my job to define you. I think it is my job to help you. But I need to tell you in time you will define yourself because that always happens. My job is not to define you.

When I look at people, forget people. When I look at you guys, I know just about all of you. We are all good friends. We all love each other. You have decided to make this place your spiritual habitation and in the foxhole to try to get the work done. But when I look at you, I do not look at you and see your issues. I do not look at you and see necessarily your problems. Or at least I do not focus on that. No, what I see when I look at you, I see 150 people here today who are in different stages of a building program. That is what I see. I do not see so and so over here with her problems and so and so over here with his issues. We all have problems. Everybody has problems. There will not be a day that we do not have issues until we get home to heaven. That is not the point. So why look at, if you want to look at people and see all you see is their issues and their problems, then you will never get anywhere with them. I look at you as a building of God and every one of you is in a different stage of completion. That is how I view you.

A funny aspect all my life. All my life I have heard pastors talk about building buildings and the big idea is, "As soon as you get a group of people, build a building." It is like that Field of Dreams, "If you build a building, they will come." I lost my dog one time and he was a good dog and I loved him very much and he ran away. I figured out long and hard how to get him back. I went out and I built the biggest, most luxurious dog house that you ever saw in your life. It had different levels in it. It had a heated pool in it. It had a bathroom in it. It had running water. It had one little thing you hit with your paw and dog biscuits popped down. It was the greatest thing in the world. I built that right out there in the backyard. So wherever my dog was running up and down the street, he would see it and he would come to that dog house because that was the best dog house in town. He never came to that dog house.

But I found him. You know how I found him? I did not find him by building a big, luxurious dog house. I found him by going out up the streets, down the alleys, through the fields and calling out his name. Finally there he was, covered with mud, covered with bristles, covered with ticks, covered with thistles. Mud caked all over him. But I found him. You do not get people to come to

church by building a big building. You get people to come to church by going out and finding them and taking them the way they are. We all have our fleas.

I told you the story about the miracle talking dog, did I not? Johnny Carson Show back in 1965. My mom and I used to watch Johnny Carson all the time. One night Johnny Carson had the talking dog on there. I did not really believe it, but my mom said, "We have got to watch this." When I was 15 years old, so I sat down there and watched it with her, and sure enough, brought this guy out with his dog. This dog, it was incredible. Now it was not the goofy stuff that I say. Like my dog can talk when I ask him what is on the house. He says, "Roof." When I ask him what is on the tree, he goes, "Bark." Not like that. This dog can talk. This dog, he would ask her the question, this dog would answer him. Everybody thought it was funny. I thought it was a joke. Then suddenly everybody realized this dog could talk. He would ask him a question, the dog would answer him back. Everybody thought it was a ventriloquist. No, no, no, this dog could absolutely talk. This guy made \$60 million with his dog.

Later on, they had a great big interview on him and they went in, this guy had bought a big palace and there is this beautiful house out there in LA, and he went in the back, big pool, running water and fountains. There was absolutely, a doghouse was big as this room. The dog came trotting out and sat down there and the reporter is taking it down and talking to the guy. They said, "This is incredible." And the dog got a beautiful place. All of a sudden the dog just starts going crazy and he starts scratching, just scratching. The reporter, she says, "Man, you have got a dog that is worth \$60 million. He is on every TV show in the world. And you have got this house and all this stuff and it just seems to amaze me that even with all of that, this dog has got fleas." The guy that owned the dog looked at him and said, "Well, that is so he does not ever forget he is the dog."

Why do we have problems in our life sometimes? Make those problems our fleas. So we do not ever forget who we really are. We are going to heaven. We have all the things that God has for us. But we still have fleas on us, do we not? When I look at you, I do not see you as a bad person. I do not see you, "Oh, so and so they did this, they did that." We have all had our downsides in life. But when I look at, I look at you at some stage of spiritual growth.

Some of you, you just laid the foundation in your life. You just got saved. You are like it is over there in 1 Corinthians 3, where you just got saved and you just put a foundation, a footer in your life. You are so happy. You are building upon that foundation Thursday night and Sunday morning and one on one and being the disciple and in the prayer group. You are building upon that foundation, gold, silver, precious stones.

Some of you come to the place as you got the foundation down and you have got the roof on. You have got the doors framed in, you have got the windows framed in. This thing is looking good. Now it is starting to take shape. I remember when we built our first house, for the first six weeks, there was a hole in the ground. We would go over every day to look at a hole in the ground. "Wow, that is a great hole. They really done a nice hole, did not they?" We did not know what else to talk about. "Look how straight those hole walls are." They really did a great job.

When you build a house, it is like forever to get, like it looks anything. I remember they poured the footer. What a day that was. "Oh honey, they poured the footers." "What is a footer?" "I do not know, let us go see." Some people go over to their house every day to see what the builders do or what they do not do. I have even known guys that were after the builders left. They went over and cleaned up what the builders missed because it is their house. But for a long time, that house just, but when they start putting the walls up, they had to start looking like a house. Then we would walk over there and we would walk around and we would get an idea the size of the rooms. Then you can start thinking, before that was just a hole in the wall, then it was just footers, then it was a cement foundation. Now it has actually got walls. It has got some kind of, but you want to really see something? Where did they get the roof on?

A lot of you just like that. A lot of you just poured the foundation into your life. You are just starting this thing out. Others of you, you are building the walls around you. Some of you have got the roofs on. Some of you have got the doors hung. You are really looking good. Some of you have got the windows in and they actually slide up and pop out so you can clean them and put them right back in. You have got those roloks ones. Those are nice. Some of you are even starting to add the furnishings that we talked about. You are putting the things in. You have got the carpet down. You have got the walls painted. You are hanging the lights. You have got all those secret things that God has given you that you are putting in your treasury. Everybody is in a different stage of spiritual growth.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:10, that you and I, when we build this, there will be a wise master builder. And we are to take heed how you build. Yet, some of God's people, you started it and just never finished it. Learning the Bible is, as I said earlier, a lot like learning to play a musical instrument. You have to take long hours of practice to get there, long hours of practice every day to stay good. It only takes about two weeks of not practicing to find out how bad you could get real quick.

Pat Arinsky was a great concert piano player. He said, "I practiced eight hours a day." He said, "It took me 32 years to get where I am at and I practiced eight hours a day." He says, "If I miss one day of my practice, I can tell it. If I miss two days of my practice, my music critics can tell it. And if I miss three days of practice, everybody can tell it." That is the way it is with us in the Bible. The building the temple of God, finishing it is not an option. Your heritage is involved in this. The ensuring that your family is going to carry on the heritage of the Lord.

Folks, it is almost, it is next week's end of 2010. It is beginning of 2011. When will God's people finally figure it out? You are not building just a building. You are not even building just a temple. You are building your spiritual future for your family, your children, your friends, your loved ones, and for your millennial inheritance.

I have never understood this. Most parents, they want their kids to have a better life than they had. My parents did. One of the things that I did not understand, if you are a teenager here this morning, you need to try to listen to this. I know you probably cannot, because you have got yourself between your ears, but you have got to listen to this. You have got to look and sometimes you are going to get to the place where I got 20 years after I left my mom and dad and

I got a little time under my belt and I realized all the sacrifices that they made for me that I did not appreciate when I was there. I look at my attitude about things and I did not appreciate the fact that how hard they work. My dad worked in a steel mill for 21 years before he died of cancer. My mom worked about every job there was, from being a Navy-owned lady to working in a restaurant to working there, just so that we kids could have what they wanted us to have that was better than them.

My mom and dad did not buy a car. They did not buy the first car until almost six years after they were married. We do not get a car when we are 15 or 16. We think the end of the world has come. They waited probably 15, 20 years before they bought their first house. You get married now, you think you have got to have it all right now. Back then times were different. Values were different. I guarantee you, you are going to make a big mistake in life. You are going to look back something down the line and you are going to see all that they did for you and you are going to see how stupid you were with the thing.

But most parents want their kid to have a better life than they had and I admire that. They want them better themselves in every way. That is why some of your parents put up a scuffle for you to go to college when they never went. They said, "Well, you did not go." No, you know why they do that? Because they want you to have a better life than them. That is why. They want you to have a better education. They want you to have a better job. They want you to have a better marriage. They want you to have a better life in general. I admire that, but I have never figured it out. When it comes to spiritual things and having a better spiritual relationship with the Lord, parents just fall apart.

You realize from the Bible's principles that wherever your spiritual level is right now, as a parent, if you do not do something to inject it into your child, that your child's spiritual level will be probably two or three levels below yours. That is just the way it works in the Bible. That is just a rule of thumb. You and I are the only one that can ensure their success. I think it is the same exact way with churches in Christianity.

Most preachers are very insecure. Most preachers do not know very much about the Bible and they get very intimidated with people who want to learn the Bible. They do not like you asking questions that they do not know because they think that it makes them lose something. So they always try to keep you under there that you do not ever ask more questions about the Bible than they know. Now the unfortunate side of that, they do not know anything about the Bible anyhow. So you are going to be way down on that level all your life. You start asking questions that they do not know the answers to, and you are going to have some problems in life.

Personally, I think every generation, it is my own personal opinion now, I think based on the Bible, of course. Personally, I think every generation of Bible Christianity ought to be better than the last generation. It is not, but it should be. You know what? I expect you to know the Bible better than me in time. You are younger than I am, you are smarter than I am, you are quicker than I am, your memorization is better than mine, and your study habits are still fresh. I provide you with all the tools for one purpose: so you can get better. Why? Because this church has to keep growing, and it has to get past where I am at, if Jesus does not come, that it gets where God

wants it to be with the people who are going to lead it after I am not here any longer. That is just the way that it works.

But it is the same way wherever you go. There is absolutely no reason for you to lose your kid, but some of you will. There is absolutely no reason to keep God's heritage from not going in everything that you do. But some of you will. You just will. Everything that Bible wraps itself around, it wraps itself around the concept of our future and everything.

Romans 8:18

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

That says right now, when you struggle with what you struggle with, the reason how you get through what you struggle with right now, no matter what it is, I do not care. The way you get through what you are going through right now is to look at what is coming down the line. We cannot do that. We are not trained to do that. Having the vision to see who you are in Christ, where you are at in Christ, and where you are going with Christ. God's people today, like no other time in history, are so short-sighted. They let the circumstances of life rule their actions. They are only affected by the things immediately around them.

The building of your temple, just like when Zechariah came to these folks, the building of your temple, your body, for the cause of Christ, does have some immediate effects. There is no question about it. You will have the blessings of God. You will have the principles of guiding you in life that you do not have to make any more bad choices. You will have a walk with God, fellowship with Him. You will have Him directing your steps, the joy and the fellowship of enduring this life as you fulfill God's plan and God's will for your life.

I think Psalms 1 probably says it better.

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Now that is the immediate effect. Now the next verse says, "But the ungodly are not so." See the contrast? That is the immediate effect. But there is also a future effect. When God gave you those children, God gave you those children because He knew that you were the surest bet He had that those children would grow up, nurtured in the Lord, knowing about the Lord, getting saved, and then moving on down the line and keeping that heritage of God alive. Right now, today, in this very moment, in all that you do in your life, you are building the future generations of your family as God's heritage.

We have all seen, I cannot think of the name in the movie right now, but there have been several movies that are like it. I always like movies like this. You see the movie where somebody has the ability to go back in time, and they go back to the 1820s, and then in the course of time, the guy finds his great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather alive, and he faces him, and he knows who he is, but the grandfather does not know who he is. In time, something happens, and the guy kills the grandfather, or the grandfather gets killed, or this guy somehow enacts the fact that this guy dies. Now, can you see the complications of that? If you went back 200 and some years and you killed your grandfather, or your great, great, great, great, great grandfather, the bottom line is you would not be here today. In other words, you would alter completely and forever the future.

Now, we know we cannot do that. That is just in the movies. But I will tell you what, in the same thought, my friend, sitting here today, you can do the same thing by killing your heritage spiritually down the line by what you do today in building your temple. You see, it is not about you. You are not just building something for you. It is not just about, though, it is just great. You are a millennial inherent. It is about ensuring that God's program goes on. His heritage continues. You and I are the only ones that can ensure that.

I have learned something over the years. One of the things that I have somewhat changed my thinking on through the process of time is I used to think that God's plan to reach the world was through individuals. I do not believe that anymore. I believe that individuals are important, but I believe rather that it is the heritage of God and the unbroken family, families ministering together. Your kids growing up in this church, ministering with mom and dad, dads with sons, moms with daughters, uncles with nephews, grandpas with their grandchildren, that you lived, see that third and fourth generation come to the place where a family together is all ministering together, growing together, that the kids look at grandpa or grandma or great grandpa or great grandma, that they look at dad and all the people in between and everybody has a love for God and God's heritage in that family goes on.

Years and years and years ago. I have got to confess to you, this has been probably 35 years ago. When it happened, I thought it was pretty goofy. I thought it was theatrics effects and maybe it was, but as the years go by, it certainly as I look at what I am talking about today, at least in this vein, it really helped me understand it. I went to a Christmas party to a large church one time, it was a Christmas Eve service. Obviously Christmas Eve services, it is all about Christ, Christmas and sometimes they put plays on or whatever, but this was much more simpler.

Everybody who went in got a candle and there must have been 2000 people in his church. Everybody went in got a candle, but only four or five people got lighted candles. When they came to the part of the service that they wanted to make the illustration. The illustration was how that we as the light of God should impact others. They turned all the lights out. All you saw in his vast auditorium was one little candle here, one little candle here, one little candle here, one little candle here, one little candle here, just lights in the darkness. Then at the pastor's command, he said, "Everybody now share the light you have with the person next to you." Immediately the five candles went to 20 candles, went to 100 candles, went to 500 candles, went to 1000 candles, went to 1500 candles. Finally at the end in about 30 short seconds, the whole place was

illuminated by over 2000 candles. Everybody had the light lit, but it all started with just five people who were willing to share the light.

I have looked at that over the years and I thought to myself, that is not only a great picture of Christianity, that is a great picture of what our family should be. We had the only insurance that God was counting on for your children was for you to understand that they were a heritage and pass the light that you have onto them. That is just it folks, that is all that is. That is why Zechariah, he does not beat them up. I am not beating you up today. I am coming after your heart just like he went after their heart. I am telling you, you building your temple is not a choice, it is not something that you really have a say in one way or the other. You are not just building your body, you are building your future with your family. And how that thing works down and plays down all the way to eternity. You have got the candle in your hand, your kids have candles but they are not lit. It is up to you to make sure that that light gets to them. It is just that simple.

Now the good news is that I am done. The good news in Zechariah is that they heard what he said, they listened to what he said and they finished the building. He preaches this around 520 BC. In 516 BC, four years later, the temple is now completed. They not only ensured that what they had at the immediate, but they now assured that 2400 years later, when the Messiah came in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John through the heralding of John the Baptist out of the wilderness, that their children and their children and their children and their children and their children would be in the place to get the light that God had for them. They were not just building a building, no more than you are building a building. They were building their future, just as we are building in this church. This church will only be as strong as the families that are in it. Your family will only be as strong as the mom and the dad in your spiritual leadership that lead it.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do love you. Thank you Lord for the great book of Zechariah.