

They are men wondered at (Quality: good)

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Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

[0 : 00] All needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Zechariah chapter 3 and a part of verse 8, Zechariah chapter 3 and verse 8 and the middle cross.

They are men wandered at. They are men wandered at.

As is my custom and I hope it's profitable and I feel in my own mind it's very needful that I give a little introduction of the background particularly of this prophecy.

You remember the Jews because of their sins and Jerusalem was invaded, the temple was destroyed and God's ancient people taken into captivity for 70 years.

But through the prophets particularly Jeremiah and others God gave this promise that at the end of those 70 years there would be a return to Jerusalem and a building again of the temple.

[1 : 34] And it was at this time as the Jews were beginning to return that God raised up Haggai and Zechariah. I shall not take time tonight for sending Haggai who particularly was used to encourage them in the building of the temple and to encourage them.

And so the temple was built that Zechariah also brings a word from heaven of encouragement to God's dear people and reminds them in the first place of their fathers that had sinned and exhorted them in their coming back to repent of their sin and to turn to God and to keep his commandments.

We have then a brief description of what the prophet was led to see a man riding a red horse and there were trees in the midst of the valley, myrtle trees.

There were red horses speckled. There's in between red and white and white horses. Briefly, red signified judgment. The speckled raining rather more the mixed judgment and mercy together.

White times of spiritual revival. The Lord here riding on the red horse a judgment against the enemies of his dear ancient people.

[3 : 05] And he stood in the midst of the myrtle trees. The myrtle trees signifying the dear people of God. And the myrtle tree was an evergreen tree, a very humble tree, and in the valleys.

God's people are often in the low place. And the secret of their continuance is the Lord their God is in the midst of them.

And then the promise, and four times in one word, in one verse we get one word. Yet, the cry, yet, thus saith the Lord, my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

Verse 17. Then a brief word on the four horns and the four carpenters. The horns signify power, signify error, signify antichrist, and signify all that is opposed to the truth.

And they go forth in power. But says that God also showed him four carpenters. That meaning, those that he raised up to fray, to overcome, and stop these going forth in their power and evil and error.

[4 : 29] Now, it mustn't take longer, but we have, I think, in the first five or six chapters of this wonderful prophecy, we have, I think, seven times how the prophet says that he was, that lift up his eyes, or the Lord showed him, sometimes by vision, and sometimes by word.

And in chapter two, well, it mustn't tarry at length, because I need to come more to the third chapter. But there's a promise of increase, Jerusalem to be measured, and that Jerusalem that before had been raised to the ground, had been destroyed.

And God says to his people, I will be a wall of fire round about you, and keep you. And again, whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.

And that the land would be measured, that Jerusalem should be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein.

Chapter two, and verse four. And that signifies, beloved friend, how there's such a prosperity, such an expansion, that there'd be too large, as it were, for walls, but God would be the wall of fire round about them.

[5 : 49] And oh, how we would pray that there might be a season of prosperity. Just one more word, and we come to the third chapter. And that is, throughout the history, there have been seasons of prosperity, there have been seasons of where there's been a withholding, as we would view it, of the power of God.

We do not know the purpose of God in the future or the present. We do look back on the days of our youth, those of us older, and we remember better times in many aspects.

But it's the same gospel. It's the same word that's preached. But there seems very little evidence compared in those days of our youth, of the Lord's world, when people spoke very freely, one to the other, of the things of God, where there were God-given additions to the churches.

But now there seems a withholding of that divine power. But with what is before us, we can be assured that whether as the Jews were in captivity, there were the godly Jews among them, they were watched over, they were preserved, they were kept.

And so, in these days, whether in a time of, as I said, withholding of the word of God through the purpose of God, that may we be faithful, hold fast to the truth, stand in the old paths, and contend earnestly for the faith that once delivered unto the saints.

[7 : 25] I must now come more particularly than to the word before us. And we go and look at this word, men wandered at.

He showed me. Maybe he showed to us. Maybe we have a spiritual understanding of it. He showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord.

The two considerations here. First, we are reminded that the priests of old stood in offering sacrifices.

They did not sit. We are reminded, and it's a wonderful blessing for our souls, that our Jesus, rising to heaven, ascending to glory, his work was done.

He sits at the Father's right hand. But the offerings of the sacrifices were old. They stood. And so here, we have Joshua standing, signifying.

[8 : 32] He was the high priest, and his service was to minister before God. But further, and more clearly in this matter, he stood there under a condemnation, awaiting a judgment.

We read, he stood, and there was Satan there at the same time, standing at his right hand to resist him.

Satan. The accuser of the brethren, accuses them day and night. not only as an enemy, not only with accusation, not only coming as a roaring lion, but also, and more difficult to discern, the wiles of the devil.

Very difficult, and we need to watch and to pray when he would overwhelm you, when he would, as it were, seek to overcome you.

May God give us grace to look up unto our God for that help and that grace to sustain us. But all the peril and the danger, when, as in the Garden of Eden, Satan came and said, hath God said, casting doubt upon the very word of God.

[10 : 04] My dear friend, Satan will attack all in whose heart there is the work of God's grace.

Those who may walk in the ways of wickedness, he won't disturb them, and may indeed induce them to greater evil.

And dead professors, those who pretend to be Christians, yes, oh my friend, I say that Satan is satisfied, but let a poor sinner try to struggle to the throne of grace, to cry out for mercy, to seek the Savior, then you may be sure there's an enemy ready to cast down, and we need grace to constantly watch and to pray.

Satan standing at his right hand to resist him, to be his adversary.

You will remember that dear Job, how that there's the sons of God came before, oh my God, there came Satan. Hast thou considered my servant Job?

[11 : 24] And Satan had, how he was upright and walked in the fear of God, and Satan said, ah, look, he's prospered, look all that he has, you take that away, and you'll curse thee to the face.

God permitted Satan to do that, but not to take his life. All that the dear man had was swept away in a day, and yet he said, he that God had given, and blessed be God that had taken away, what a solemn day that was, and Satan hadn't finished then.

Touch his body, and God permitted him, and Satan wouldn't have done that lightly, with no comprehension of what that man must have suffered.

Did Satan destroy Job and his faith? certainly, scum came out of it. When I say that, self-pity, and we don't wonder at it, but, every now and then, came out the triumph of faith.

For example, when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. He knoweth the way that I take, and, again, I know that my Redeemer lived at one point.

[12 : 55] I just want to touch one more. The Lord Jesus, Satan, and Simon, Simon, Satan, hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.

Thy faith. A born-again sinner, and Satan's got his eye on him. It seems largely that Peter was almost the foremost in some ways of the apostle.

We go very carefully when we say that, but often seem to be the forefront. And, my dear friend, how Peter he said, when the Lord warned him, he said, he would never fail as it were.

My friend, be careful of standing in assured strength of your own. Stand in faith in what God has said. Stand tremblingly before God in this way.

Lord, I know that if I'm left to myself, I shall fail. Satan will have me. I shall drop, I shall fall. And, I shall fail. He did, Peter did.

[14 : 17] But the mercy is, as you well know, that beautiful word. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter and he went out and wept bitterly. Oh, may there be that look that breaks the heart.

there's a hymn. And I feel constrained to name it. It seems perhaps just a little off my subject, but it's so solemn and so blessed as we stand at the cross.

a hymn of Newton's. In evil, long I took delight, and all by shame or fear, we're going to speak about this brand that's in the fire, till a new object struck my sight and stopped my wild career.

I saw one hanging on a tree in agonies of blood who fakes his languid eyes on me as near the cross I stood.

Sure, never to my latest breath can I forget that look. And this is it. And I've been here, my friend. It seemed to charge me with his death, though not a word he spake.

[15 : 33] You see, my sin, your sin, believer, was laid on Jesus. And that was the cause with the others that he suffered as he did.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt and plunged me in despair. I saw my sins, his blood had spilt and helped and nailed him there.

a second look. Pray for it. Pray for that first look. Pray for this second look. A second look he gave which said, I freely all forgive.

This blood is for thy ransom paid. I die that thou mayst live. The enemy of souls has no answer to the blood of Jesus Christ.

These are men wandered out. I've anticipated just a little bit there. We're speaking about Joshua. There'll be men wandered out. You wander as you see him there.

[16 : 39] Standing in filthy garments. See the enemy right by his side to accuse him and to cast him down and to resist him.

And we read the Lord didn't say anything to Joshua to start with or about Joshua. The Lord speaks to Satan. The Lord rebuked thee.

Oh Satan. This is the answer. You want to condemn him. You want to as it were the Lord to condemn him.

But no he said even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuilt thee. And here's the answer.

It's not this. A brand plucked out of the fire. Oh this brand that seems to speak to us of perishing being consumed dead in trespass and sin the children of wrath even as others.

[17 : 47] And this being in the fire being black defiled dirty filthy as an unclean thing. Are you offended?

My friend that's us. Our sin. If the Holy Spirit teaches you you won't be offended. You say Lord that's me. That's me. There's not there's a brand plucked from the fire.

Again it's only fit for utter consuming nothing else. Destitute here of one of the Spirit in a sense of senselessness indifference and unconcern.

Oh my friend perishing what use who would think of plucking that brand out of the fire. fire. But here the Lord silences the enemy of our souls and says is not this a brand plucked from the fire?

Here we see then a hand that goes forth and plucks this brand takes it out of the fire.

[19 : 06] A hand of power of force of love of tenderness of grace a hand that apprehends I like that word Paul uses it as he writes in the third chapter of the Philippians apprehended what does it mean if a policeman met you and apprehended you and you've done we say you've done wrong he apprehends you he arrests you he stops you God in his mercy in his grace apprehends poor lost perishing sinners Saul of Tarsus proved it as he was converted outside Damascus the Lord stopped him arrested him called him by divine grace and so the Lord rebuked thee O Satan even the Lord that hath chosen

Jerusalem rebuked thee there's not this a brand plucked out of the fire a sinner saved by a grace now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel before the Lord we spoke of the brand dirty smutty we speak now here of the high priest clothed in filthy garments he has not said a word he is silent but the Lord answers as it were the devil answers those that may say oh what hope can there be of him oh these are men wonder and this expression men wonder that is an expression of every child of

God the miracle of God's grace it is a miracle because only God's grace that can save our souls only by grace are we saved that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works as any man should boast men wonder that and my dear friend who wonders at it most I believe it is ourself do not we wonder that love should reach our heart that God should call us by divine grace oh why did Jesus show to me the beauties of his face why to my soul did he convey the wonders of his grace let's get to the hymn there's just another verse as well because it's so precious and it's such a sweet testimony he says men have wondered that and the language of one born again oh how could he so sweetly smile on such a wretch as I

I who his name did once revile and his dear truth deny but he loved my soul because he died for me because that nothing could control his great his firm decree oh beloved friend here we have men wandered at and here is Joshua standing and here he's in these filthy garments but here comes a word here comes the Lord speaking does he say take him away cast him out of my sight oh but he says no take away the filthy garments and from him and unto him he said here he now speaks to Joshua behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment here we have the death of Christ here we have the blood of the dear redeemer that cleanseth from all sin and it does here is this fountain open for sin and uncleanness here is the precious blood that cleanseth from all sin and oh my soul with wonder view for sins to come there's pardon to be careful of that devil could even tempt you on that said well it doesn't matter this part my friend be careful

I feel this if we had a deeper sense of love to Jesus and his love to us we should be kept from sin in fact little sense that we perhaps excuse ourselves my friend may we be kept from excusing ourselves personally in our own sins may we rather say Lord it is sin I have done wrong and not to excuse it not to think it's only a little sin my friend little sins if you can speak of little sins were atoned for by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary I I have I have caused sin how can sin be forgiven well well do you know it and how deeply you love it oh my dear friend it's because there's only one could do it and it's the one that speaks it's the dear

[24 : 51] Lord Jesus it's I've done it I've caused thine iniquity to pass through it and in that way and I say with care and deep reverence he could not do it it could not be done by a word from his lips only it was to be done by himself as you've just been singing in that hymn of coming from glory to this earth let's just go back to it again and it's a precious gospel hymn isn't it and it helps me with my subject this evening where he says he left his starry crown and laid his robes aside on wings of love came down and wept and bled and died what he endured no tongue can tell to save our souls from sin and from hell he says I've caused thine iniquity to pass from he didn't pass you by he came where you were he saw you lost he saw you perishing he saw you in all your filth he saw you like that poor man in the ditch there where the priest goes by and the

Levite has a look but goes by but the Samaritan comes where he was has compassion pours in the all and one and Jesus had come where we are he come down to this earth he come and to lay down that precious life that life that in that body prepared for him so sinless so healed holy so pure so spotless remember the lamb was to be spotless in the sense and without blemish but here my friend is the sinless one the holy one and there's the sacrifice he's the one that hangs on the tree at calvary and my friend it is this dear Jesus this is I've caused an iniquity because he's borne that punishment because God the father had dealt with his son dealt with our sin though man crucified him man set him at that laid on him the iniquity of us all I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee perhaps some of you are longing for the assurance of this you say oh if only

I knew it my friend pray on and do pray for faith it's not some separate blessing I want to be careful what I say there it is a distinct blessing but it all flows from faith that little faith enlarge faith and when the Lord is pleased to give you that enlarge faith to say I know yes my faith looks back to see the burden thou didst bear when hang on the cursed tree and you may say in hopes her guilt were there my faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine while like a penitent I stand and there confess my sin I place it my hand on that dear head said Lord here's all my sin here I am filthy and vile oh bring thy love apply thy blood assure my conscience of its part in the redeemer's blood and bear thy witness with my heart that I am born of God men wonder that ah we are indeed world derides us despises us calls us narrow minded and all the rest of it and thinks what poor things were fancy going to a prayer meeting fancy going to a service in the way let alone two services on a Sunday and so forth may let them despise my friend ah we would not exchange although we would say oh you poor sinner may God have mercy on your soul we don't turn and say

I'm more holy than that no I'll be just like them and worse than they are but I say Lord oh that thou will have compassion open their eyes may they behold themselves as sinners and may they behold the dear redeemer of the calvary's cross thy cause thine iniquity to pass from you but what about these filthy garments well look at the glorious gospel and think of it in the day of the chasing of Jesus I have to refer to it the prodigal son and look at that man he takes all his possessions the health and strength that God gives him and wastes his substance in the branches and gets away from the father as far as he can but the father is watching him and that that lad gets into such a state that nobody would love him nobody would care for him and he's perishing with hunger I will rise and go to my father and there my friend there's the father and there's the kiss there's the embrace but there bring forth what is it was it the chains was it set ready at that prison no it's the best robe the glory those filthy come look at the poor boy he's in rags he's tattered

I don't want to exaggerate but I see it and I see here the best the robe of the king the robe for a prince a robe that's spotless a robe that is pure taken away those filthy garments clothed him with that robe of righteousness oh beloved friend what a gospel it is that we preach what a precious Christ he is to our souls and so we have here I will clothe thee with a change of raiment and that raiment is the righteousness of Christ you think of it your sin his his righteousness yours that's what it means as simply and yet profound you see our sin was imputed charged to him now he imputes his righteousness to us the new birth is the possession of the principle of holiness that holy principle within sin oh my friend though it's in a body of sin but here is the clothing of that best and that glorious dress and you think of we're reminded of Christ as the love of the church and gave himself for it the church is his bride and how the bride will as it will provide herself on earth her garment so forth but there the bridegroom gives her the garment and she'll be arrayed in that and when he comes he'll go he'll gather his bride men wonder that men wonder that may be despised and hated but my friend I say here is it our clothing of the changed room and let them set a fair mitre upon his head and that as I would believe and I have not clear leading here but I think it sets forth what the

[31 : 32] Lord says in the book of the Revelation of being kings and priests before God he is the king of kings but his people will reign with him and here we have also they are priests to offer sacrifices before God oh the sacrifice of prayer the sacrifice of thanksgiving the sacrifice of confession and the sacrifice of good works not that we plead at it but those that are pleasing in the sight of God with such sacrifices God is well pleased now they are men wonder that men wonder that oh how what can we say on such love my soul still ponder love so great so rich so free save whilst lost in holy wonder why oh God such love to me hallelujah grace shall reign eternally I don't know I don't know whether I've got a verse that I was trying to look for and I meant to have found it before the service but there's a line of a hymn where one is in heaven and there's wonders and the wonder of wonders that he's there and so it will be with us my friend

I feel I must leave it here I hardly knew I was going to speak tonight I believe you've been praying I hope God has been in it oh may God bless this word to us we want the experience of it there's nothing can be compared to it be a millionaire you poor have a crown of mercy you rich may God grant us this real religion the possession of Christ as I recently preached in Obadiah that Israel shall possess their possessions and be possessed heaven at last yes and there's the proof of what we've been saying that men wondered what are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they these are they which have come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and laid them white in the blood of the Lamb there it is men wondered and look there it is the blood and white robes take away those filthy garments and clothe them with a change of raiment may almighty

God bless this precious word to our souls and pardon all of this amen