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September 21st: Zechariah 1 & Matthew 15:29—16:12

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Horses among the myrtle trees. The feeding of the four thousand.

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Transcript

Zechariah chapter 1. In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts, Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.

But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, As the Lord of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shibat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, I saw in the night, and behold a man riding on a red horse.

He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel

and white horses. Then I said, What are these, my lord? The angel who talked with me said to me, I will show you what they are. So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.

And they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, We have patrolled the earth, and behold all the earth remains at rest. Then the angel of the Lord said, O Lord of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years? And the Lord answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. So the angel who talked with me said to me, Cry out! Thus says the Lord of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion, and I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease.

For while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster. Therefore thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.

Cry out again! Thus says the Lord of hosts, My city shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem. And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns. And I said to the angel who talked with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.

Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen, and I said, What are these coming to do? He said, These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it. The book of the prophet Zechariah is the penultimate book within the book of the twelve.

It is helpful to read it alongside its immediate predecessor the book of Haggai. Haggai and Zechariah ministered at the same time, both encouraging the people in the rebuilding of the temple. We read of their ministry in Ezra chapter 5 verses 1-2.

Now the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Josedach arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

And then in Ezra chapter 6 verses 14-15. And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

And this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. There were 24 divisions of priests originally in the temple and we read of some of the priestly divisions that returned in Nehemiah chapter 12. In Nehemiah chapter 12 verse 16 we discover that Zechariah was one of the chief priests, representing the house of Iddo.

Recognizing that Zechariah was a priest can help us to make more sense of some of the imagery of his prophecy. In 586 BC the city of Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians had been dominant in the region since around 605 BC after the battle of Carchemish.

Babylon however was defeated by Cyrus in 539 BC. By Cyrus' decree the Jews had been sent back to Jerusalem. After an initial start made to the rebuilding of the temple under the governorship of Shesh-Baza, the Jews had faced opposition from their neighbours and had abandoned the work.

Now over a decade and a half later and chiefly through the word of Haggai who had encouraged them to take up their building again, the temple was being constructed again. Haggai's first recorded prophecy was on the 6th month, the first day of the month, in the second year of the reign of Darius. On the 24th day of the 6th month they had taken up work on the temple once more.

Three months to the day after the recommencement of the rebuilding of the temple, Haggai had delivered his last recorded message, an encouragement to the people and then another encouragement to Zerubbabel that the Lord would empower and bless them in their labours. Zerubbabel who had become the governor of the people was also a descendant of David. Paying attention to the chronology of Haggai can be helpful when we start to read Zachariah.

Zachariah's ministry begins in the 8th month of the second year of Darius. Haggai's initial rebuke to the people has been delivered. At the end of the 6th month they had taken up work on the temple again and Haggai had also addressed them on the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The first message of the Book of Zachariah then comes after the first three messages of the Book of Haggai, before the messages with which the Book of Haggai concludes. It's important to recognise that these messages are concerned with the rebuilding of the temple. As we see in Ezra chapter 5 and 6, the messages of Haggai and Zachariah were instrumental in galvanising the people and encouraging them in the task of rebuilding the temple.

Imagery within the book that might otherwise confuse us will come into sharper focus when we consider that Zachariah is a priest and that his ministry at this point is focused upon encouraging the people in the building work. Haggai and Zachariah are two

witnesses bearing testimony to the word of the Lord to the people at this time. Zachariah's first message is a warning to repent.

This might surprise us as the people had already committed themselves to rebuilding the temple on the 24th day of the 6th month and Haggai had already delivered the opening rebuke of his prophecy to them on the first day of that 6th month. Is Zachariah merely repeating a message that has already been received? It seems more likely that we should read Zachariah as reinforcing that original message. The temple will be of little worth if the hearts of the people worshipping within it have not returned to the Lord.

The temple is, among other things, a symbol of the people and their relationship to the Lord. If the people do not have a right relationship with the Lord, the temple can become a dangerous source of presumption, undermining its proper purpose. The people need to learn from the cautionary example of their fathers.

Both the prophets and their fathers had passed away, but the word of the Lord delivered by the prophets has stood firm. What's more, that word had overtaken their fathers. It had had its full effect in the destruction of the previous temple and in the devastation of the central site of Israel's worship for almost 70 years.

It was imperative that the people took this lesson to heart if they were not to suffer the same fate themselves. One feature of Zachariah's prophecy here that's worth noting is the repetition of the expression the Lord of hosts. The Lord is the God of armies, and when Israel feels beleaguered in its return to the land in the smallness of their numbers and the precarious political position that they hold relative to the other people surrounding them, they can take comfort and assurance in the fact that the God that they worship is the great and powerful God over all armies and kings, with myriads upon myriads of angels in his host.

Unsurprisingly, considering the fact that they had already responded positively to the message of Haggai, the people reaffirm their repentance in response to the prophecy of Zachariah. Part of the founding of this temple will be the turning of the people's hearts back to the Lord. Having learnt the lessons from the previous temple and its destruction, the vision that follows in verses 7-17 comes on the 24th day of the 11th month, 5 months to the day after the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple that's recorded in the book of Haggai, it's still in the second year of Darius, in 520 BC.

This is the first of a series of night visions in the opening chapters of the book of Zachariah. The imagery of this vision, along with the imagery of other visions in this series, can be difficult to understand. However, James Jordan's insight that these all have to do with the building of the temple, I think gives us the key to understand what's taking place.

These visions are being delivered while the temple building is occurring, they are means

of encouraging the people in the task, and they encourage the people by relating the work on the building of the temple with the work that God is doing within the world more generally. It is as if while the people are working on the temple in Jerusalem, the Lord himself will be working upon the right ordering of the world. What is being done on earth is also being done in heaven.

In the vision, he sees a man riding on a red horse, standing among myrtle trees, and behind him red, sorrel, and white horses, probably best understood as dark and light chestnut, and white in colour. The identity of the man riding on the red horse is likely given to us in verse 11, where it speaks of the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees. The angel of the Lord is the messenger of the covenant, and also the commander of the army of the Lord, the same figure that Joshua meets in chapter 5 of his book.

Translations of verse 8 will often place the myrtle trees in a glen, however the word used here is more typically understood as the deep or the depths, elsewhere in the Old Testament. Others understand the word here to refer to being in the shade, under the trees. Myrtle trees are small evergreen trees.

Mark Boda observes that they can grow to the size of a small bush, 2-3 metres, or a small evergreen tree of 6-9 metres. The flowers are used for perfumes and spices. Jordan notes that the Hebrew name of Esther, who was also operating around this period, Hadassah, also relates to the myrtle, an interesting detail that might be worth further examination.

In the book of Isaiah, the myrtle tree is associated with images of restoration. Isaiah chapter 41 verses 19 and 20. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive.

I will set in the desert the cypress, the plain, and the pine together, that they may see and know, may consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it. Again in chapter 55 verse 13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle, and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Elsewhere the imagery of a grove of trees might remind us of the Garden of Eden or the building of the temple which draws upon the imagery of the Garden of Eden. Jordan suggests that we might see in myrtle trees some similarity to cedar trees that are used in the temple building. The myrtle is a smaller analogy to the cedar.

Imagery of divine horses is seen in the book of 2 Kings chapter 2 with the ascension of Elijah into heaven. Elsewhere in Revelation chapter 6 verses 1 to 8 where the four living creatures in response to the opening of the first four seals summon four horses that go out into the world bringing devastation in their wake. Later in Zechariah chapter 6 verses

1 to 8 we also see horses that go out into the world.

Again I lifted my eyes and saw and behold four chariots came out from between two mountains and the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses and the fourth chariot dappled horses, all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, what are these my lord? And the angel answered and said to me, these are going out to the four winds of heaven after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.

The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them and the dappled ones go toward the south country. When the strong horses came out they were impatient to go and patrol the earth and he said go patrol the earth. So they patrolled the earth.

Then he cried to me, behold those who go toward the north country have set my spirit at rest in the north country. There is an obvious comparison and contrast to be drawn between that, the final of the night visions and this which is the first. In the final night vision there are chariots going out to war drawn by horses.

In this first night vision the horses and their riders are not drawing chariots, they are merely inspecting or maybe spying out the whole of the earth. What is taking place here is preparing for action that will take place later. In Revelation chapter 6 the four horses seem to be associated with the four living creatures or cherubim.

The Lord is enthroned above the cherubim which in 1st Chronicles chapter 28 verse 18 is described as the golden chariot of the cherubim spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord. We see the reality corresponding to this furniture within the temple in places like Ezekiel chapter 1 and the vision of the throne chariot of the Lord that Ezekiel sees at the beginning of his ministry. While the Lord's throne chariot is driven by cherubim, angels and human beings are placed upon horses.

Jordan suggests that the colour of these horses may correspond with the colours of fire, dark red, a lighter red and white just as the throne of the Lord is surrounded by fire and the movements within it are like movements of fire. So these angelic horses are like fiery horses. The horses seem to have riders who give answers to the angel of the Lord as he inquires of them.

There is also an interpreting angel who speaks to Zachariah much as Gabriel interprets the visions of Daniel to him. How then can we put the elements of this vision together? First of all in the angel of the Lord we see the commander of the armies of God. Angelic forces have been sent throughout the earth.

The four sets of horses, the red, sorrel and white horses and then the man on the red horse representing the four corners of the earth and also the four cherubim. The myrtle

tree is associated with blessing. It also reminds us in some ways of the temple and the Garden of Eden.

Yet the myrtle trees are situated not on a mountain as we might expect but in the depths or perhaps in a glen. The angels patrolling the earth on their horses report back to the angel of the Lord declaring that all of the earth remains at rest. This however does not appear to be good news because the angel of the Lord responds to the news by speaking to the Lord of hosts asking him when he will have mercy upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah.

It has been almost 70 years since the destruction of the temple and the deportation to Babylon. When will he have mercy upon them? Interpreting the imagery in terms of this maybe we should see in the myrtle trees an image of the people and of the Lord's presence in their midst. They seem to be beleaguered.

They are situated not on the mountain but in the depths. They are not a forest of great cedars. They are rather a gathering of smaller myrtle trees.

The world may be at peace but it is at peace under the rule of a pagan nation. This is not as things ought to be. However as the angelic riders patrol the earth they seem to be preparing for action that will take place soon after.

As Haggai had foretold a great shaking of the world is going to take place. A shaking that will continue for many years getting greater and greater. At the end of the book of Hebrews we are told that God will once more shake the heavens and the earth.

Most likely referring to the establishment of the reign of Christ and the bringing down of the temple and the old covenant order in AD 70. Recognizing that this is the chief subject matter of the book of Revelation and that the book of Revelation also has an image of horses being sent out by the cherubim we might notice a further illuminating parallel between the angel of the Lord in the midst of the myrtle trees here and Christ in the middle of the tree-like lampstands in Revelation chapter 1. The Lord delivers a message of reassurance and comfort to the angel who talks with Zachariah declaring that the Lord is jealous for his people that he has returned for them and that he is angry with the nations that are at ease as they have overstepped their bounds in bringing his judgment upon his people. In verse 3 of Zachariah's first prophecy the Lord had said return to me and I will return to you.

They had returned to the Lord and now the Lord had returned to Zion. With his renewed presence in their midst the temple, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah would all flourish once more. In the second of his night vision Zachariah is shown four horns.

We're not told in what form he sees these four horns but he is told that the horns represent those forces that have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. Horns are

obviously connected with beasts. They represent the power and the authority of beasts.

We see this in the book of Daniel where the horns symbolize particular rulers or authorities also in the imagery of the book of Revelation. As Jordan notes it's probably significant in places like 1st Samuel chapter 16 the king is anointed by the horn. It communicates authority and power.

Significantly the imagery of the horn is also associated with the altar which has four horns one at each corner. In Revelation chapter 7 verse 1 we see four angels at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. The altar corresponds to the earth and the four horns to the powers that govern the earth.

The four horns that have scattered Judah, meaning Israel and Jerusalem, are pagan powers that dominate the earth. We don't necessarily need to identify four specific powers. Rather we can see this as a representation of the world being dominated by these pagan forces.

The reality that the altar corresponds to, the earth and its four corners, has taken a perverse and adulterous form. The Lord however will answer these four false horns with four craftsmen. Craftsmen elsewhere in scripture are particularly associated with the building of the tabernacle and the temple.

We might think of the work of Bezalel and Aholiab of the various craftsmen that accompanied them. We might also think of Hiram and his work on Solomon's temple. The Babylonians had deported the craftsmen and the artisans and the smiths and all skilled workers to ensure that Jerusalem could not rebuild the temple, its walls or re-establish a well-armed fighting force.

Now however with the rebuilding of the temple the Lord is also going to act within the world against the forces that He will establish the reality that corresponds with the temple symbol. The four craftsmen are like four builders that are forming the true altar of God. They correspond to the four false horns being sufficient to the task of overcoming them and establishing the true worship of God in their place.

The world becoming the four-horned altar of the Lord once more. A question to consider in both of the books of Haggai and Zechariah we see the reaction of some of the elderly people to re-establishment of the temple, their dismay and sorrow at its smaller proportions. All of this led to a tendency to disregard its significance.

How might the prophecy of Zechariah here encourage the people to think of the temple and its building in a different way? Matthew chapter 15 verse 29 to chapter 16 verse 12. Jesus went on from there and walked beside the sea of Galilee and he went up on the mountain and sat down there and great crowds came to him bringing with them the

lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others and they put them at his feet and he healed them so that the crowd wondered when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking and the blind seeing and they glorified the God of Israel. Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat and I am unwilling to send them away hungry lest they faint on the way and the disciples said to him where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd and Jesus said to them how many loaves do you have they said seven and a few small fish and directing the crowd to sit down on the ground he took the seven loaves and the fish and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds and they all ate and were satisfied and they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over those who ate were four thousand men besides women and children and after sending away the crowds he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadam and the Pharisees and the Sadducees came and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven he answered them when it is evening you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red and in the morning it will be stormy today for the sky is red and threatening you know how to interpret the appearance of the sky but you cannot interpret the signs of the times an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah so he left them and departed when the disciples reached the other side they had forgotten to bring any bread Jesus said to them watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and they began discussing it among themselves saying we brought no bread but Jesus aware of this said oh you of little faith why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread do you not yet perceive do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many baskets you gathered or the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many baskets you gathered how is it that you fail to understand that i did not speak about bread beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees the concluding half of Matthew chapter 15 begins with Jesus performing a series of healings on a single occasion he goes up on a mountain a site which could be chosen for orientation to God it's a place where you'd go to have communion with God to pray or something else and he sits down and people come to him and bring him people for healing the outcome of the event is that people glorify God this is the heart of the purpose of the healings very often when we're reading through the gospels we can think that with the conflicts with the religious leaders that what really matters about the signs is establishing credentials and authority and a demonstration of power but that's not the main thing at all it's about God coming near to his people and his people drawing near to him and that's exactly what we see in this particular incident this event provides the context for a miraculous provision of food to the crowd having healed and taught the people and led them to glorify God Jesus does not want to send them away hungry and in an event reminiscent of the earlier feeding of the five thousand Jesus repeats the pattern of the Lord's Supper

in verse 36 he took the seven loaves and the fish and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds already in reference to the feeding of the five thousand i noted the way that this is representing a church scene in part the disciples are receiving the bread from Christ the bread that makes us think of the institution of the Lord's Supper later on and they are passing it on to the people the people that have been gathered around and under their leadership this is preparing us for the later ministry of the church under the teaching and the guidance and the rule of the apostles this seems to occur in a largely gentile region particularly emphasized in the book of Mark and it's suggested in part also by the coming of the Canaanite woman to Christ Jesus is feeding not only Jews but presumably many Gentiles too and we must now think back to the conversation with the Canaanite woman Gentile God-fearers are feasting with the lost sheep and so the dogs that many would dismiss are now eating at the same table with the Jews there are five thousand in the earlier account connected with Israel's military ordering the 50s that they're divided into and 12 baskets are gathered up afterwards they're fed with five loaves of and two fish here we have four thousand maybe connected with the four corners of the earth and there are seven baskets gathered up the word for basket is different the feeding of the five thousand is the primary act and miracle but the Gentiles are also blessed with the Jews there are leftovers leftovers for others there's a super abundance more than enough for others beside Israel five loaves seven loaves it makes 12 loaves all together Israel was represented by 12 loaves of the showbread and maybe we're supposed to see a new Israel the new people of God being formed here there are 12 baskets then there are seven baskets the 12 baskets are connected maybe with the 12 disciples also with the symbolism of Israel more generally this is the establishment of a new Israel around the meal table of the Messiah who provides for his people in the wilderness after this the Pharisees and the Sadducees come together to test Jesus it's interesting these were rival sects within Judaism and yet they're united in their opposition to Jesus suddenly they find that they're friends in this particular endeavor they both oppose and resist Jesus and so they can come at him together even though they're coming from different sides nothing brings enemies together like a greater enemy they ask for a sign but Jesus has already given them more signs than they would know what to do with can maybe think back to Isaiah chapter 29 verse 13 that he referenced earlier the Lord said because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and their fear of me as a commandment taught by men he goes on therefore behold I will again do wonderful things with this people with wonder upon wonder and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden that's exactly what's happening here they're asking for signs but they've been given a multitude of signs and just not seen them they're being bamboozled by Christ their wonders are just leaving them befuddled they may be able to read the weather from the sky but they can't read the signs given from heaven in the events of their own day Jesus describes them as an evil and adulterous generation this harkens back to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 32 verses 5 and 20 they have dealt corruptly

with him they are no longer his children because they are blemished they are a crooked and twisted generation and again and he said I will hide my face from them I will see what their end will be for they are a perverse generation children in whom is no faithfulness he proceeds they have made me jealous with what is no god they have provoked me to anger with their idols so I will make them jealous with those who are no people I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation for a fire is kindled by my anger and it burns to the depths of Sheol devours the earth and its increase and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains they will be given no sign save the sign of Jonah just as Deuteronomy chapter 32 warns God made Jonah and the people of his day jealous by those who are not a people people who are not called by his name God sent his word not to part of the nation of Israel but to the Assyrians and to Nineveh and as he did that he showed grace to people who are not a people and brought to jealousy his own people this is the same thing that Christ threatens here in part the sign of Jonah will be seen as the gospel goes out to a different people and they will be provoked to jealousy Jesus warns about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees which his disciples don't understand but the point is that teaching is like leaven which when hidden in hearts produces loaves of particular character Jesus is forming a new set of people as loaves cutting off the old leaven of the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees but introducing the new leaven of his words and his spirit now we need to recognize that leaven is not the same thing as the yeast leaven is part of the dough of the old bread that is taken and put into the new bread to cause it to rise in a sort of sourdough form and that continuing tradition is one part of the bread being passed on to another it's generations of bread and that generational character is like a tradition and the point of cutting off leaven is to cut off the tradition to break with the past to make this cut with the former pattern of life leaven then is passed on as a tradition from loaf to loaf and the disciples need to make a clean break with the Egyptian loaves of the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees Jesus challenges them to pay attention to the miracles that had just occurred and the numbers associated with it we may find this very difficult to understand the numerology of such events just seems opaque to us but Jesus clearly wanted his disciples to see meaning in those events those events were signs they weren't just great works of power they were great works of meaning as well five loaves for five thousand seven loaves but only four thousand fed some have suggested that this might be an anticipation of the feeding of three thousand at the day of Pentecost seven loaves should feed seven thousand but there's three thousand left over and maybe that's an anticipation i'm not sure i'm less convinced by that but it's a possibility some have raised Jesus teaching concerning leaven and loaves and these other themes can draw our mind back also to the teaching of the parables in chapter 13 where many of these themes are also present Jesus is teaching in a way that challenges us to recognize the tradition and the way that it forms us when you've been taught by a particular person it's as if there's part of their dough that is placed within you something that has formed them that has their character and it becomes part of you and you need to be very very careful what you take into yourself and so cutting off the old leaven of

wickedness the old leaven of false teaching the old leaven of the traditions that lead us away from God is absolutely imperative because if you take that on it will eventually determine your character there is a flip side to the warning of course in the book of first Corinthians we see the church described as a loaf and a loaf that is formed of many different people were all one loaf now Christ's forming of a new loaf is formed in part through the gift of a new pattern of life of new leaven that Christ has placed within us his words and his spirit and as a result we take on a new character the character of a loaf for God's glory and so it matters a lot the way that we live as bread we're supposed to think also maybe of the relationship between the other themes of growing of wheat and tares and these other ways in which those symbols maybe feed into the symbolism of bread and yeast there's a process here God is making bread for himself and then think how that might relate to our celebration of the Lord's Supper which concentrates the life of the church in the celebration of a shared eating of a loaf which we all are we are one loaf and so we share in one loaf a question to consider what might be learned about our gathering together and worship from this passage and its various elements