

XII. Zechariah in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel According to Zechariah
“The Prophetic Word #1: The Branch”
Zechariah 6:9–15
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
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This is the pivotal text in Zechariah. This is God’s Word, inspired, inerrant and infallible. Zechariah 6:9-15 says [9] *And the word of the LORD came to me: [10] “Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. [11] Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12] And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. [13] It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’ [14] And the crown shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.*

[15] *“And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever, and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached to you.

We finished the single night where eight visions were given to Zechariah. I still am amazed at this – eight visions in one night that are then recorded. The book of Zechariah was probably composed over three years. He started it just about the same time that Haggai started his prophetic ministry. Zechariah 6 is a pivotal text for two reasons. Reason number one is we now move from the first third of the book, which are the eight visions to the middle third of the book, which are the eight prophetic words from God given to Zechariah. In this study, we are at the first of the prophetic words. When we finish going through the Divine revelatory eight prophetic words, we get to the last third of the book, which are eight oracles from God given to Zechariah.

Reason number two is this very first prophetic word is a profound word. The Book of Zechariah is a book that is pointing to the New Testament and that shouldn't amaze you because the whole Old Testament is pointing to the New Testament. The Old Testament, as Augustine rightly said, is the New Testament concealed in prophecy types, shadows, symbols and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Or, as one great commentator said, ‘the Old Testament is like walking into a beautifully furnished room that's very dimly lit, for you can tell it's beauty, but you can't see its detail and then the New Testament and the coming of Jesus cuts the light on.’ As one begins to think ‘Oh, that's what the Ark was about. That's what the offerings were about. That's what the temple was about. That's what the altar was about. That's what the Passover was about. That's what circumcision was about,’ as it's all pointing to Jesus.

There’s a wonderful moment where a Bible study that took place 2000 years ago I would love to have sat in on and it was on the road to Emmaus where Jesus sits down with two of His disciples around a meal, and He opens the Scriptures to open their minds, to open their eyes, to open their heart (Luke 24:13-35). Luke 24:27 says [27] *And beginning with Moses and all the*

Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. For those who studied the scriptures, Jesus said in John 5:39, [39] *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me.* That was the Old Testament they were studying.

Take a disciple like Timothy, where Paul tells Timothy in his closing words in II Timothy 3:14-15, [14] *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings* (the 39 books of the Old Testament), *which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* So the Old Testament is pointing to Jesus. The Gospels revealed the life and ministry of Jesus, and then the Epistles expound the implications of the life and ministry of Jesus.

Zechariah has one trajectory that goes right to the Gospels, and then he has another trajectory that goes right to the Book of Revelation. One trajectory is sending us to the Messiah who comes. The other trajectory sends us to the Messiah in the consummation. This is one of those pivotal moments in this book that we are studying right now. In this study, we will be looking a wide variety of other passages that are important that come out of our study in Zechariah 6. This first prophetic word, out of eight is the pivotal one for the whole book as it points to the coming of the Messiah and the consummation of the Messiah.

As we look at this chapter, I want to remind you that Zechariah is a prophet, and also a priest. In this series on Zechariah, we learned that his father was a priest. His grandfather was a priest, and he was a priest in exile. He has returned from exile and now God has called him to be a prophet. Zechariah 6:9-11 says [9] *And the word of the LORD came to me: [10] "Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. [11] Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.*

Remember, when they are returning from exile, their leadership is being established by Zerubbabel, who is of the line of David, tribe of Judah and is the appointed governor. The two prophets that stand out are, Haggai and Zechariah and the priest that came with them was one named Joshua. It's the very same name that Jesus is going to be given. It is from the Old Testament – Joshua – and the New Testament is Jesus. It means Jehovah saves. Joshua is a priest in the line of Levi, the line of Aaron, and he's already appeared for us. Remember when we looked at the gospel according to Joshua, who was pointing to the Messiah and the glorious promise that we saw in that text, that on a single day, that coming there will be a Joshua that's coming and in a single day He will remove all of the guilt and shame of all of the sins of His people for all of eternity which is pointing to Jesus (Zechariah 3:8-9).

Joshua makes his appearance again, and in this text he's about to be crowned. Zechariah the Prophet is about to lead the crowning of the high priest, and he leads the crowning with terms of regality, royalty, honor, and esteem. Yet Joshua can't be a king, not this Joshua, because he's not of the line of David. Besides that, the Scriptures forbid the co-mingling of the office of King and Priest in the Bible. There was a line for the Kings and it was of the tribe of Judah. There was a line for the priest, but there is the anticipation in this text of a kingly priest. This kingly priest is anticipated by this symbolic act whereby Zechariah is instructed to go to some recently arrived exiles from Babylon.

Not only did they have three deportations of Jews into Babylon into slavery in exile, that under the Medes and the Persian starting with Cyrus and then moving to Darius and Artaxerxes, but there would be three importations of Jews back to Israel. The first one was probably about

20000 to 40000 people, but they're going to continue to come. So here we have been made aware of that there has been some recently arrived exiles in this text. In fact, three families are indicated. Now, these families, when they return, obviously have returned with resources. They have returned with means disposable to them. They have some means, even silver and gold. So they're to go to those families that have come and then to another family, probably, who has the artisan skills necessary for this crown. This is a composite crown. It is a crown of both silver and gold, affirming the regality of the one who would wear it.

Priests are not crowned but kings are crowned and here is a high priest that is about to be crowned. Don't miss the convergence of the three anointed offices in the Old Testament in this event. There is Joshua, a high priest, and yet he is about to be crowned as a king with the kingly symbolism by a prophet who has been directed named Zechariah. So, all of the three anointed offices are being brought into our focus in this prophetic word – office of prophet, priest and king. As it is occurring, some very interesting words are said to us about this particular act that is going to take place. Let's continue in the text.

Zechariah 6:11-13 says [11] *Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12] And say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. [13] It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."*

Here's a crown that's to be made and then the crown is to be placed, but as it is placed, there is a prophetic word toward a man whose name is the Branch. The audience listening at this time in history, the Old Testament people, would know of the prophecies that are being called into the moment, and those prophecies are found in Jeremiah and Isaiah. So let's look in Jeremiah 33.

Jeremiah 33:14-16 says [14] *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise (referring to His promise of a New Covenant) I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. [15] In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch (could be translated sprout or shoot) to spring up for David (house of David, so we know it isn't fulfilled in Joshua), and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. [16] In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'*

[17] *"For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, [18] and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever."*

So will that be the old covenant Judah and Jerusalem or a new Israel, those not circumcised of the flesh, but circumcised of the heart? Will it be the old Jerusalem or will it be a new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven? This Israel will have one of the line of David, and it is a forever reign, plus it will be a forever sacrifice from a forever priest. Looking back at the Zechariah 6:11-13 do you see the presence of the king and the priest? Verse 12b-13 says [12b] *...for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. [13] It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."* On this throne will be both a king and a priest. Is it two people or is it both offices subsumed in one person? And the reason why is because this one of the line of David is also of the line of a greater priesthood that subsumes the Leviticus priesthood and brings it to finality.

Let's now look at Isaiah 11. Parts of this passage are sung in Handel's Messiah. Isaiah 11:1-2 says [1] *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. [2] And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.* So here is this branch, the Messiah. Clearly, Zechariah is calling our attention with this symbolic act of crowning Joshua, who bears the name of the coming son of David, but is not of the tribe of David, as Jesus was, but at the same time is One who will unite the priesthood and the kingly office. Joshua cannot be the fulfillment of that. This is a symbolic act, not a full act and while certainly the second temple shall be built under his oversight and he shall give direction to it, this is looking at a temple that shall branch out of Israel to all the nations. It shall move with its tentacles into all the nations. Thus, the use of exiles in the resources as we bring our attention to the exiles who will be blessed by this Branch and the temple that He establishes.

Let's trace this a little bit more as we go back to Zechariah 6:12-13 which says [12] *And say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. [13] It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."* He is not only the Messiah; He is the builder of this everlasting temple. Now let's look at I Timothy 1 for I believe it is this text in Zechariah that is in the mind of the Apostle Paul as he gives direction to Christians by his letter to the church at Ephesus and to his disciple Timothy, who is pastoring the church at Ephesus. This is a glorious benediction that Paul gives.

I Timothy 1:16-17 says, [16] *But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. [17] To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.* Hear the words of Zechariah to the King of the ages, Immortal, invisible, the only God be this honor, this kingly honor, this Royal honor, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. Now go back to Zechariah 6.

In Zechariah 6:12-13 we see there is king and priest on the throne and the counsel of peace shall be between them. Both the presence of the king and the priest brings peace. Now, is that peace between the priest and the king? I don't believe so. I believe it is the peace for all of those who are in this temple. This Messiah builds a temple and the blessing in that temple because His name is Righteousness, will be, in fact, peace. What is he speaking of? Let's look at Romans 5. In Romans we will see the peace that is offered from the counsel of this kingly priest who sits upon the throne, the one to whom the prophet office points. It is a glorious promise.

Romans 5:1-5 says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

In Him, this kingly Priest peace is now proclaimed. Why? It is because He's the Prince of peace. 'Peace,' Jesus says, 'I give to you, not as the world do I give to you' (John 14:27). 'In the world you have tribulation, in Me you have peace. Take courage, I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). This Prince of Peace is the One who gives us peace with God. Now let's look at Colossians where Paul speaks of the preeminence of Christ.

Colossians 1:15-20 says [15] *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. [17] And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [18] And He is the head of the body, the church. (not only through Him is all creation, through Him is redemption) He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. [19] For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through Him (this Messiah, this preeminent Christ, prophet, priest and King) to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.*

The righteous One in His atoning work, grants us this peace that is promised by the One who sits on the throne, who is both King and Priest of the Lord. Now let's look at the book of Hebrews 7:1-3 says [1] *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, [2] and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. [3] He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.* His name is Righteousness and is a King who rules over the city of Salem, Shalom, Peace for He is the King of Peace.

The Apostle Paul will take upon himself the desire to let us know that this Jesus is the forever Priest, the forever King and the forever Prophet. He is the great Prophet, the One who is the final spoken word of God. He is the great King that was the King who rules forever, the King of righteousness. And He is a King who brings peace, peace with God by His atoning work and His righteousness. He is also a Priest of the order of Melchizedek. I don't have time to go through whether Melchizedek is a type of Christ or a Christophany but the whole point that Paul is making, is when Abraham brings the tithe in worship which is one of the marks of worship, and bows before him to worship him, so does all of his seed – bows – in Abraham's loins is not only Isaac and Jacob, but in his loins are the sons of Jacob and that is Levi. So, when Abraham bows Levi bows and the order of Melchizedek subsumes the order of Levi. So, we have on this Messianic throne a Messiah who brings to an end the Leviticus priesthood by bringing the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek and the eternal reign, King of Peace and King of Righteousness. That is the one this symbolic act is pointing to – our Redeemer, our Messiah.

All of the prophets, not just Zechariah, are pointing to Him who is God's final Word that we must not neglect. So, He is the Prophet, the Priest and the King, and He builds a temple. Not only does He sit on the throne, He builds a temple not with the resources of exiles, He builds a temple of exiles. His temple is made of exiles as He brings His people from the uncovenanted nations of the world into the covenant of grace. Peter gets it and Paul gets it. Let me show you how they both get it. First, let's look at I Peter 2 and here Peter is writing to the exiles throughout the nations.

I Peter 2:4-12 says [4] *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, (In other words, this temple is not only a place where you find refuge, you are this temple that He is building as you come to Him) [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." [7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The*

stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” [8] and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

[9] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

[11] Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

According to this passage, the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builder rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. So, Jesus is either your cornerstone for life and you are one of the living stones built upon it in this temple, this Messianic temple, that we are not only blessed to be a part of and cared for, but we actually are pieces of it. We are the living stones. And if you don't have Him as the cornerstone, then He becomes the rock of offense and by your rejection of Him, you come under the judgment of God instead of the peace of God and peace with God.

We are exiles that are made a royal nation of priests – don't miss that. If you're in Christ you are raised up with Christ. Who is Christ? He is Prophet, Priest and King. Who are you? If you are in Him, you are a royal nation, a priest. We are all prophets because we've been given God's Word to proclaim. We are all priests because we can now go directly to the throne of God through our High Priest, Jesus. We are all kings. We are joint heirs with Christ. So here you see this marriage of the offices is in the book of Zechariah in order to establish this temple of exiles who house the kingdom of exiles, who live as sojourners and exiles in this world. Our roots aren't here. We are good citizens wherever we're found, but our ultimate citizenship is in heaven and we are the temple of the Lord. What identifies the Temple of the Lord? It is His dwelling place, and He dwells in His covenant people, His church, the body of Christ. Paul also knew this so let's now look at Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:11 says *[11] Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—* The Gentiles here are the uncovenanted people. Those in Christ are the circumcised made not with hands in the flesh, but made by the Spirit. What is cut away is not our foreskin, but our evil heart and our sin record and we're given a new heart and a new record. Let's continue in the passage.

Ephesians 2:12-14 says *[12] remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off (Gentile language) have been brought near (Jew) by the blood of Christ. [14] For He Himself is our peace (He is the Prince of Peace, in Him we have peace with God), who has made us both one (Jew and Gentile, we are united in Christ) and has broken down in His flesh (His Incarnation or ministry, His atoning death and resurrection) the dividing wall of hostility.*

What is this passage telling us? It is telling us in our midst the only hostility we have is against sin, not against each other. We have been given an unbelievable opportunity in this broken world of anger, division, and hostility to present a community of Christ's Church in which the only thing we hate to death is sin. We have only one mission and agenda. It is to fulfill His mission – to make disciples of the exiles of all the nations, and then to bring them to Him.

He has broken down hostility. Why would we build up hostility? It is because many of us listen to cable communication more than we read our Bible and hearing it preached. And what goes in comes out. So here is this glorious promise of peace with God and the peace of God through the Prince of Peace who has broken down the barriers of hostility that divided us from the Lord through His atonement and divided us from one another, so that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Let's continue in the passage.

Ephesians 2:14-17 says [14] For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility [15] by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, [16] and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. [17] And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

When did Jesus preach peace to Gentiles? Here's when; when the Great Commission takes place and we send out these missionaries with our faith promise commitment and when we share the Gospel, Jesus Himself is speaking to them and His sheep will know His voice (John 10:27). So, when you go, He speaks through you. And when people came to you, He spoke to you, and He came and preached peace to you, who were far off in peace to those who were near. That's code language, far off is Gentile, near is Jew. Let's continue in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:18-22 says [18] For through Him we (Jew and Gentile) both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord (where King Jesus, our Priest and Prophet reigns). [22] In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

This is where Zechariah is taking us. His trajectory comes and now explains why there are four Gospels. The Branch has come and the branches are branching out to all the nations, bringing all of His people, the exiles to Himself. His temple is not only His dwelling place and our dwelling place, He is the temple and we are the temple He is building, not with stones cut by human hands, but those cut by the Spirit of God as He has brought us to Christ and we're born again by the Spirit. We are justified by His blood and we have peace with God. He is fashioning us to follow Christ through sanctification and one day this Temple will fill the new heavens and the new Earth, when this King Jesus, our Priest and Prophet, comes again. So, Zechariah is not only pointing us to the Gospels, he's pointing us to the consummation, the Apocalypse, and he is telling us how and why we arrived at where we are. Praise God, from whom our blessings flow.

We have a mission. We have a message and may people see the reign of the righteous King and His peace when they see us and when they hear us. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Right now, take a few moments in silent prayer and have the Lord speak to your heart as I would ask Him to speak to my heart. Lord, we thank You for Jesus, Yeshua, greater than Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, Jesus, the Priest Everlasting, who not only intercedes for us with the sacrifice, He is the Sacrifice. So, we have peace with God, who now is King who rules over us that we may grow in the grace of God and take the message of the Gospel of peace to the world. You can be right

with God through Christ Jesus, the One who has overcome the world of sin that we might have everlasting life. Dear Jesus, thank You that our Savior is the fulfillment of Your Word, Your final Word, and we can immerse ourselves in that Word as we read it, study it, memorize it, meditate upon it, and then hear Jesus through the preaching of it. O God, do Your work in us that we might be a manifestation in a local church of Your glorious church militant and triumphant, and the testimony of the King, our royal Priest to the world. Jesus, we sing. Jesus as we preach and unto Jesus we live. God our God, may we know the blessings of peace and the absence of worldly hostility and may it attract many to hear our message; Jesus, not simply makes a difference. He is the difference, our Prophet, Priest, and King. Thank You Jesus, I pray in His Name, Amen.