

XI. The Crowning of Joshua

17-Feb-08 Zechariah 6:9-15

Theme: Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is both a priest who offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin and a king crowned with glory and honor who rules over all creation.

Key Verses: Zechariah 6:12b-13 ¹²Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; ¹³Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Review

Two weeks ago we studied the eighth and final Night Vision. Zechariah saw four chariots issuing forth from between two bronze mountains, representing the gates of the heavenly sanctuary. These chariots are powerful expressions of God's sovereignty over the nations – God rules the earth from heaven and carries out His judgments in the world of men. The various colors of the chariot horses speak of their power: red for warfare; white for victory; black for economic hardship; and dappled for famine, plague, pestilence, and death.

Particular emphasis is placed upon the north country – Babylon – and the south country – Egypt. The dappled horses of plague are fittingly sent to Egypt, where death and destruction await all those who oppose God and His people. Meanwhile, the black horses of economic hardship are sent to Babylon, the city of man, the place where created things are worshiped rather than the Creator. Interestingly, the white horses of victory are sent after the black horses, and then the Spirit of God comes to rest there as well, indicating that God has conquered these enemies by removing their idolatry and converting them.

Thus, this vision of the sovereignty of God ruling over the affairs of men reminds us that there are two different ways in which God deals with His enemies: He can either curse them and destroy them; or He can convert them and bless them. This message should be of encouragement and comfort to the church. The chariots of God are at work in the world to protect the church, to enlarge it via conversion of the nations, and to administer justice to His enemies. Nothing can impede His sovereign will, as represented by these chariots, from being accomplished.

Introduction

The section in front of us this morning, “The Crowning of Joshua,” is intimately connected with the eight Night Visions which precede it, although it is separate from the visions. This passage recapitulates several of the major themes of the Night Visions – specifically the construction of the temple, the work of the Messiah, and the ingathering of the nations. As such, it serves as a fitting “appendix” to the Night Visions of Zechariah.

Exposition

A. The Crown (6:9-11)

⁹Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ¹⁰“Receive the gift from the captives— from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day

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and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. ¹¹Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest (Zechariah 6:9-11).

Why is this passage considered by all commentators to be an “appendix” rather than another Night Vision? The answer lies in the introductory phrase: “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying...” (6:9). We noted previously that each of the eight Night Visions was introduced with visual language such as “I saw,” “I looked,” “He showed me,” “I raised my eyes,” “behold,” and so on. In other words, the Night Visions were primarily characterized by what Zechariah saw. But now, coming out of the Night Visions, Zechariah the prophet receives a more typical revelation of God’s word. It is no longer a vision that Zechariah sees, but a command that he hears.

So, as we read this passage, remember that we have left the visionary world of symbolic pictures and fantastic images. The word of the Lord comes to Zechariah in the real world and gives him a real command to carry out. “However, this actual historical event, like the visionary episodes, had symbolic significance” (Kline).

Zechariah is told that three Jewish men – Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah – have just shown up in Jerusalem. We are not told the date they arrived from Babylon, but it may be the very morning after Zechariah’s night of visions. In any event, Zechariah is told not to wait, but to go and meet them that very day, in the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah.

Verse 10 gives us a lot of names; most of which are repeated again in 6:14, with a few significant differences (which we will treat in the commentary on verse 14). Therefore, we should pause for just a minute to understand what these names mean, because they appear to be important. Tobijah means “the LORD is good”; Jedaiah means “the LORD knows” or “the LORD cares”; Josiah means “the LORD sustains” or “the LORD supports”; Zephaniah means “the LORD conceals”; and Heldai means “enduring.” All of these names are connected with the current situation and are related to the overall theme of Zechariah’s prophecy. Surely, God through these revelations has demonstrated His enduring goodness to, care of, and support for His people. He “conceals” them in the sense that He hides them or protects them from their enemies. Thus, in the very names of these individuals, we can see God’s providential care for His people, just like the presence of the Angel of the LORD in the midst of the myrtle trees spoke of God’s presence among His people.

Who are these people whom Zechariah is commanded to seek out? The first three appear to be Jewish pilgrims just arriving in Jerusalem from Babylon. They are called “captives” in the sense that they were returning from the seventy years of exile in Babylon. God had told Zechariah that the Jews should “flee the land of the north” (2:6), and already we have émigrés from Babylon! Not all the Jews returned to Judah in 538 BC with Zerubbabel and Joshua. Many stayed behind, like Esther and Mordecai (Est. 2:5-7), or came later, like Ezra (Ezra 7:6) and Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1; 2:11). And so Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah arrive in Jerusalem in February, 519 BC, but they do not come empty-handed; they come bearing gifts of silver and gold from Babylon.

It is not clear whether these riches came from a collection of good-will offerings made by the Jews of Babylon, or if it were some sort of official gift from the Persian treasury. I tend to believe the latter, because of the context in which these gifts were delivered. In the third Night Vision, Zechariah was told of the nations: “For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants” (2:9). He goes on to link this shaking of the nations

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with their ingathering into the church of the LORD. God had said essentially the same thing through Zechariah's older colleague, Haggai:

⁷... and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁸'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts (Haggai 2:7-8).

God promised that the Messiah would shake the nations and spoil them, like a new exodus where the children of Israel plundered the land of Egypt (Ex. 12:35-36). Jordan points out that here, as a wonderful foretaste of that greater fulfillment under Christ, comes the first fruits of those prophecies. No sooner had Zechariah seen God's visionary promise to bring the spoil of the nations into the church, then here it comes, being delivered by Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah! And if God could bring in the silver and gold from Babylon, how more certainly can He bring in the souls of Gentiles into His glorious kingdom?

Zechariah is told to find these three Jewish exiles from Babylon at "the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah." Who was Josiah? Several ideas have been raised, such as a goldsmith or an inn-keeper (Mackay). However, Kline raises the interesting possibility that Josiah was a temple official connected with the stewardship of the temple treasury. This makes a certain amount of sense. If the three pilgrims were bringing an offering from Babylon, it would be for the temple work and be deposited in the official church coffers. Thus, the "house" of Josiah might actually be the temple, or the temple bank vaults. What better place to store the silver and gold?

Regardless, Zechariah is directed to go retrieve this gold and silver brought from Babylon and have a special crown made out of it. The Hebrew word (*'ataroth*) is actually plural and means "crowns," but it is clear from the singular verb which follows that only one crown is meant. The best way to understand this command is to visualize two circlets, one made of silver and the other of gold, intertwined so as to make one elaborate coronet of glorious beauty, not unlike Middle Eastern puzzle rings, which can have 4, 6, or even 8 interwoven bands that fold together to make one ring.

Once this intricate crown is fashioned, what is Zechariah supposed to do with it? He is to take it and crown someone. That makes sense, because that is what you do with a crown; however, the person to be crowned is somewhat surprising. If you've been paying attention throughout the Night Visions, you would expect that individual to be Zerubbabel, the governor. After all, he is a Davidic prince and worthy to be crowned as a king. However, it is not Zerubbabel who is mentioned in verse 11, but Joshua, the high priest. This identification is so unexpected that liberal commentators in the past have tried to substitute Zerubbabel for Joshua, even though the text is perfectly clear.

You can put oil on the head of a priest and anoint him (Lev. 8:12), or you can put a turban on a priest's head as a symbol of his office (see 3:5). But you don't put a royal crown on a priest; the two offices in the Old Testament were separate – kings were from the tribe of Judah and priests from the tribe of Levi. Bad things happened when you tried to claim both offices – just ask Uzziah, who in his arrogance tried to add the priestly office to his kingly role and was struck with leprosy for his presumption (2 Chr. 26:16-21). Crowns were for kings (2 Sam. 12:30; Song 3:11), not for priests.

Thus, this "crowning" of Joshua is clearly meant to be a symbolic action. Zechariah wasn't declaring Joshua to be king. If he had placed the crown on Zerubbabel's head, it may have

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caused confusion and trouble amongst the Persians, since the governor clearly had a royal claim over Judah. That scenario might have been viewed as a prelude to physical rebellion against Persia. But crowning a religious “holy man” would not draw the same attention, since it clearly had no political significance. Rather, the meaning is related to the Messiah who was to come.

We saw that the fourth and fifth visions – “The Cleansing of Joshua” and “The Golden Lampstands” – featured Joshua and Zechariah and were both clearly Messianic. In particular, the fourth vision proclaimed that Joshua and his companion priests were “a wondrous sign” (3:8), a type of the Messiah to come, a Messiah who was hinted to be both priest and king. Here in this follow-up to the Night Visions, that declaration of the role of Messiah is made explicit, both by this symbolic action in verse 11, and also in the oracle which follows (6:12-13). Once again, Joshua is a sign or type of Jesus Christ, who is both Priest and King.

In this declaration, Zechariah is making very clear what David had prophesied before:

¹The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ²The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! ³Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, you have the dew of Your youth. ⁴The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:1-4).

Psalm 110 is a Messianic declaration that Jesus Christ is both a king, ruling on his throne over the nations, and an eternal priest, “according to the order of Melchizedek.” This symbolic crowning of Joshua says the same thing, although the sequence in Zechariah seems to be important. It is interesting to note that Joshua the priest is given a royal crown; Zerubbabel the prince is not given a priestly turban. The priest becomes the king, not the other way around. Jesus Christ serves His people first as a priest by giving “His life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45). It is only after the infinitely valuable sacrifice for sin is made that Christ ascends into heaven and rules as king (*cp.* Eph. 1:20-22). Priest then king – the order is important.

B. The Message (6:12-15)

1. The Messiah (6:12-13)

¹²Then speak to him, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; ¹³Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:12-13).

Along with the command to crown Joshua, Zechariah is given a message to pronounce at the coronation ceremony in verse 12-13. This oracle is profound, and each phrase is full of meaning. We will explore the meaning of each and every clause in this pronouncement.

The first phrase is, “Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH!” This is the second time that Zechariah refers to the “BRANCH.” Just as in that previous reference (3:8), Zechariah is linking the imagery of the Branch with Joshua, the high priest. This title of the Branch shows up four other times outside of Zechariah: it is used twice by Isaiah (Is. 4:2; 11:1) and twice by Jeremiah (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:14-18). Both Isaiah and Jeremiah describe “the Branch” as a Davidic king who will come and rule in righteousness and execute judgment upon the earth. So, when Zechariah

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says that Joshua the high priest is in some fashion a type of Messiah the king, he is adding a new depth to the revelation of the ministry of the Branch.

Jordan points out that in these six references to the Branch in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, we have a four-fold picture of the identity of Jesus Christ. First, He is clearly the King (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:14-18). Second, the Branch is a “Servant” (3:8). Third, we learn from the present verse that He is also a “Man” (6:12); and finally, Isaiah calls Him the “Branch of the LORD” (Is. 4:2), indicating His divine nature. King, Servant, Man, and God – this four-fold picture of Christ is one way in which commentators try to describe the different emphases of the gospel writers. Matthew portrays Christ as the king; Mark’s emphasis is on Jesus as a servant; Luke the physician writes to describe the humanity of Christ; while John’s soaring commentary leaves no doubt that Jesus is God. All this is captured in this simple image of Christ as the “Branch.”

It is also interesting to see how Zechariah introduces the imagery of the Branch: “Behold the Man!” Zechariah wants us to see the glory and majesty of the Branch who is both priest and king. However, these very words were used in a quite different context by Pontius Pilate to introduce Jesus Christ in His humiliation to the Jews at His crucifixion:

⁵Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!” ⁶Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him” (John 19:5-6).

Ecce Homo: “Behold the Man!” “These are the words that echo throughout the Bible, as the core of God’s message for the salvation of sinners – ‘Behold the Man!’” (Phillips). From the very beginning of the Scriptures and the promise of the Seed of woman to deliver us from sin (Gen. 3:15), the entire theme of the Bible has been to direct our attention to Jesus Christ. “Behold the Man!” Pilate and the Jews beheld Him, but they didn’t see His glory (Jn. 1:10-11). They didn’t see the eternal Son of God underneath that crown of thorns, wearing a blood-spattered robe. But when we look, with eyes of faith, what do we see? The glorious Christ, crowned with gold and silver, sitting on His throne. We no longer see his humiliation, but His glory:

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The second phrase describing Messiah is, “From His place He shall branch out.” This is an obvious play on words: the Branch will branch out. But what does it mean? Various interpretations have been proposed. Mackay says that Messiah will be a true descendant of David, branching out from the royal family. This is consistent with Isaiah 11:1, which says, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Phillips suggests it means that the Branch will come forth out of relative obscurity to succeed in His work. Jordan interprets this phrase as implying the Branch is self-sufficient. “He doesn’t branch out from something else; He branches out from Himself. Only God is autonomous and self-sufficient. Thus, this verse points both to the humanity and divinity of our Lord. He is a man whose name is Branch, and He is the branch of the LORD who is self-sufficient.” This last explanation makes the most sense to me.

The third and fourth phrases say the same thing: “And He shall build the temple of the LORD; Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD.” Obviously, this ties back into the Night Visions,

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since one of the major themes there was to reassure the Jews that they would be successful in their temple building project. But these statements go far beyond the literal reconstruction project that was already underway in Jerusalem at that time. The work of Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple was only a type or shadow of the much greater work of the Messiah in temple building. Since temple building is a kingly task, using Joshua the high priest as a type of Messiah who would build a temple is another example of Zechariah's combination of the two offices of priest and king in Jesus Christ.

But what is the "temple of the LORD" that Messiah builds? It clearly does not refer to the current building project – Zerubbabel is the builder of that building (4:9). In one sense, it refers to Jesus Himself:

¹⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²²Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said (John 2:19-22).

But, it more clearly and profoundly refers to the spiritual body of all believers, the church, which is frequently referred to in the New Testament as the temple of God (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pe. 2:5). What is the mission of the Messiah? To build a temple – a people – for Himself, "out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." And the amazing thing is that our Messiah – our Priest and King – will also make us – His temple – priests and kings:

⁹"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

The fifth phrase is, "He shall bear the glory." It is variously interpreted as "bear royal honor" (ESV) or "clothed with majesty" (NIV). The word translated "glory" or "honor" is not the same word as in 2:6: "He sent me after glory." Rather, it is often translated as "majesty," and "relates to the awe-inspiring splendor that is characteristic of God whose glory covers the heavens (Hab. 3:3) and who is clothed with splendor and majesty (Ps. 104:1; 96:6)" (Mackay). Thus, this phrase seems to be another declaration of the divinity of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Only God Himself can carry or bear the majesty and splendor of who the Messiah is. God is Messiah – Messiah is God.

The sixth and seventh phrases say essentially the same thing: "and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne." If you had any doubt about the symbolism of crowning a high priest with a royal crown, this description of Messiah should put those concerns to rest. Jesus Christ is both priest and king. He is a priest sitting on a royal throne. How unusual, how unexpected! There was no place for sitting in the work of a priest – there were no chairs in the temple for him to sit down and rest. The work of a priest was never finished, because sin was never completely dealt with under the law: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Thus, the priest never got to sit down. However, our great High Priest, Jesus Christ is different:

¹¹And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for

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sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Jesus can sit down and reign from his throne (Ps. 110:1), because His priestly work of sacrifice has been completed forever. Jesus' priestly role as intercessor still continues (Heb. 7:25), but the sacrificial work is done. Jesus Christ is a "priest on His throne" ruling until all His enemies are placed under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25).

The meaning of the eighth and final phrase describing Messiah is much debated among commentators: "and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." This "counsel of peace" is a meeting or consultation between two parties that results in peace. The big question is, who are the two parties that create peace? There are three commonly proposed interpretations to this question.

The first explanation is that "between them both" refer to the twin offices of Jesus as priest and king (e.g., Mackay, Phillips). The advantage of this interpretation is that it clearly fits the context, since this entire passage of the crowning of Joshua is meant to portray the Messiah as both priest and king. However, there are two problems with this interpretation. First, the text is written in such a way as to indicate persons rather than abstract offices. It seems strained to suggest that Christ's office of priest got together with Christ's office of king and made a counsel of peace between these two roles. Secondly, the text indicates that two different persons are involved – both of them got together to make the counsel of peace. In this interpretation, Christ is portrayed almost schizophrenically – like Gollum's "Slinker" and "Stinker" personas in *The Lord of the Rings* – He is One, not two.

The second interpretation focuses more on the result, which is peace. Where is that peace? "The peace is between the holy God and sinners, between God and ourselves" (Boice). In this view, the two parties are God and mankind. This also makes a certain amount of sense, since the whole purpose of the temple sacrificial system and the Messiah to which it pointed was to reconcile God and mankind together. The problem with this view is that all of the preceding phrases in this oracle have described the Messiah, and He fades from sight in this interpretation.

I prefer the third interpretation, that the two individuals contemplated in this phrase are the God the Father and God the Son, the LORD of hosts and the Angel of the LORD (Baron, Kline). This view makes sense and also fits the context. The Branch who is sent out from LORD to build the temple of the LORD works with the LORD to establish peace. "This same idea is in Psalm 110, where two persons are in view – the LORD and Melchizedek, the Father and the Son" (Jordan). The peace in question is undoubtedly the peace that Messiah achieves between God and man through His once-and-for-all atonement on the cross. Thus God the Father purposed from all eternity past to redeem a people to Himself through the work of Jesus Christ, thus making peace between God and man:

⁴...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:4-6).

¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:17-18).

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What an oracle! In just two verses we have an awesome portrayal of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Branch. He is the everlasting and eternal God, who from eternity past counseled with the Father to establish peace between God and man. He accomplished this reconciliation through His work as priest, offering Himself up once and for all as the perfect sacrifice for sin. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He has secured salvation for all who trust in Him, thus building up His eternal temple, the universal church composed of individual Christians. He has ascended back to heaven, where He now reigns as king, “a priest on His throne,” ruling the Creation and interceding for His people. “Behold the Branch!”

2. The Memorial (6:14-15)

¹⁴“Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the LORD for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. ¹⁵Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Zechariah 6:14-15).

This beautiful crown of intertwined silver and gold circlets was used only once, in the symbolic action of crowning Joshua the high priest. After that ceremony, the crown was to be stored in the temple as a memorial. This memorial had two purposes. The first purpose was to remember those who were involved in this symbolic action – the three men who had brought the gift and the one who had received it. However, we notice that in verse 14, the names of two of these four men are different than the list in verse 10. Liberal scholars may jump at this apparent “inconsistency” as a way to denounce the accuracy and reliability of the Scriptures, or to indicate that the Bible is a patchwork quilt of many sources that don’t fit together very well. But it is not credible to claim an ancient editor made such a simple mistake only 5 verses apart!

We should rather understand that “Helem” in verse 14 is an alternate name for “Heldai” in verse 10. In place of “Josiah” we have “Hen,” which may not be a proper name at all. It means “favor” or “grace,” and so the sense most likely is that this memorial is established amongst other reasons to remember “the kindness of the son of Zephaniah” who received these exiles and participated in the making of this crown. “In other words, Josiah’s grace and favor in letting these men come to his house will be memorialized in the Temple through this crown” (Jordan).

However, the main purpose of a memorial in Scripture is not for men to remember something; instead, memorials serve as a “reminder” to God. “Memorials memorialize a covenant between God and man in the Bible. The main purpose of a memorial is not for us to see it and remember what God has done (that is secondary); but the main purpose is for God to see it and remember what He has promised” (Jordan). For example, God sets the rainbow in the sky to remember His covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:12-17).

After all, once the crown is placed in the temple (after the construction was completed), no one would ever see it again. Most people could never go into the temple – only the priests. So, how could this crown be a memorial for men if they could never see it to remember what it signified? However, since the temple is the dwelling place of God, putting the crown in His house would definitely serve as a symbol that God would see the crown and act to bring to pass all that it signified. Clearly, God does not “forget” and therefore doesn’t need something to “remind” Him to take action. But this symbolic act of placing the crown in the temple assured the Jews that God would keep His promises and send the Branch into the world.

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One last promise is attached to the end of this passage: “Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you” (6:15). Here is another promise of the ingathering of the nations, the addition of Gentiles into the Jewish people, the establishment of the church of Jesus Christ. This promise ties back to the Night Visions, and particularly the third vision of the expansion of Jerusalem:

¹¹Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you (Zechariah 2:11).

How do we know Messiah has come? How can we tell that the Branch has accomplished His work? How do we know that the LORD of hosts has sent the Savior? It is the ingathering of the nations into the church. We are the proof that Jesus has come, because we “who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). We have been joined to the LORD and been made part of His holy temple. We are the fruit of the crowning of Joshua – the church is the fulfillment of that memorial crown.

Conclusion

Although an “appendix” to the Night Visions, this ceremonial crowning of Joshua is intimately linked with the Night Visions and its themes of the construction of the temple, the work of the Messiah, and the ingathering of the nations. The construction of the physical temple in Jerusalem is only a precursor to the greater work of the Messiah in building the temple of the church. Jesus Christ our priest accomplishes that work by converting the nations, bringing individuals “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). And Jesus Christ our king is “crowned with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:9) to rule over all creation.

Jesus is the greater Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 6:20). Melchizedek means “king of righteousness,” and he was the king of (Jeru)salem, or the “king of peace.” Jesus is our king of righteousness and king of peace. But like Melchizedek, Jesus is also our priest, the one who sacrifices for us and lives to intercede. It is in Christ that these two offices of priest and king are united, the fulfillment of the crowning of Joshua the high priest. Jesus comes first as priest, then as king. Jesus suffered humiliation first, in order that He might be raised in exaltation. The order is important as Paul describes in his great hymn of praise:

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11).

Jesus Christ, our priest and king, is Lord. Behold the Branch!

Next week: Lesson 12 – The Night Visions of Zechariah – Zechariah 1:1-6:15

Close in Prayer.