

Pentwater Bible Church

Zechariah *Message 7 - The Branch* *June 23, 2013*



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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Zechariah
Message Eight
The 4th Vision - Joshua the High Priest
June 23, 2013
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Painting by Sharlene Lindskog-Osorio

THE FULL REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL

Zechariah 3:5-10

⁵And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah was standing by. ⁶And the angel of Jehovah protested unto Joshua, saying, ⁷Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou also shalt judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by. ⁸Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch. ⁹For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

¹⁰*In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree (ASV 1901).*

THE MITRE IS SET ON HIS HEAD

Zechariah 3:5

⁵*And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah was standing by (ASV 1901).*

This is now the prophet Zechariah himself interjecting himself into the events in the Holy Supreme Court. He clearly says to the attending angelic host to *set a clean mitre upon his head*. He is referring to Joshua the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) who is set in the court dressed in filthy clothes. The filthy clothes represent the sin that the nation Israel has committed which resulted in their persecution by the God of the Universe. This symbolic act of God forgiving their national sin but also the future day at the end of the Great Tribulation when the entire nation will believe in Jesus as their Messiah (Romans 11:26).

Here we see the crowning of the High Priest's festive clothes the mitre or turban. This capping of the clothes represents that portion of his dress that set off or signified his office, so to speak, upon his forehead. Then on top of that was the golden plate that was attached to it. On that was written "*holiness to the Lord*", and called to bear the guilt of the children of Israel (Exodus 28:38). So now Joshua not only would Joshua be appropriately dressed for his office, but he would be emanating holiness. This holiness would be to represent the return to God of the Chosen People as redeemed. The High Priest's office had become extremely sinful and therefore unable to render God's holiness to the Jewish nation. With Joshua receiving the mitre he is willing and able to execute the office of the High Priest to the nation so they can be provided with God's holiness through the earthly assigned intercessor. The high degree of significance of this event must not be missed.

Exodus 28:36-38

³⁶*And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. ³⁷And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. ³⁸And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah (ASV 1901).*

The mitre was originally to be placed above (upon) Aaron's (The 1st High Priest) forehead, that he "*might bear the iniquity*" of the children of Israel. The High Priest as an intercessor for them before Jehovah." **נָשָׂא אֲחֻנָּה**: (*Nassa Ahon*) to bear iniquity (sin) and take it away; in other words, to exterminate it by taking it upon one's self. The high priest was exalted into an atoning mediator of the whole nation, and into an atoning, sin-

exterminating intercession. This was the role the High Priest had with the Children of Israel. The qualification for this was the gold band on the mitre with the inscription, “holiness to the Lord.” With this he was crowned as the sanctified of the Lord (Psalm 106:16). He was endowed with the power to exterminate the Israelite’s sin, which was represented by their holy heartfelt attitude in providing their holy sacrifices. The temporary atoning gifts of the nation became well pleasing to the Lord, and the good pleasure of God was transferred to the Israelite nation through the High Priest. Purity forms the necessity for receiving glory and this was true of Israel in 520 B.C. as well as their final redemption at the end of the Great Tribulation when they ask the Messiah to return (Matthew 23:29; Luke 13:35). All this was done as the Messiah looked on these events and acted as the defense attorney.

MESSIAH’S CHARGE TO JOSHUA AND ALL ISRAEL

Zechariah 3:6-7

⁶And the angel of Jehovah protested unto Joshua, saying, ⁷Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou also shalt judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by (ASV 1901).

Now the Messiah (Angel of Jehovah) begins to interject as the intermediary of Jehovah Himself (which He is). The word *va-ya-ad* (“*protested*”) means to “testify.” One of its usages is to declare something firmly. It see it used, for instance, in the words of Solomon to Shimei, “Did I not make thee swear by Jehovah, *and protested unto thee,*” etc. (I Kings 2: 21). Here too it is intended to express the solemnity and importance of the charge about to be made. The word protest has other usages than simply objecting to something.

The conditional protestation of “*Walk in My ways*” and “*Keep My charge*” (*mishmarti thishmor*) are frequently used in the first five books of the Bible for following the manner of life, which is well-pleasing to God, and for keeping the charge given by Him. It was how David spoke to Solomon on his deathbed when he said: “Keep the charge of the Lord thy God to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes.”(I Kings 2:3) The first part of the charge, “If thou wilt walk in My ways,” refers particularly to Joshua’s personal attitude towards the Lord—to fidelity in his *personal* relations to God; and the second, “If thou wilt keep My charge,” to the faithful performance of his *official* duties as high priest. This simply translates out to Joshua receiving a high set of privileges to rule God’s House, the Temple. He would also have the authority to punish anyone guilty of irresponsibility. This is the same type of charge Jesus gave the apostle Peter when He said, “*Feed my sheep*” (John 21:16-17) and “*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*” (Matthew 16:19). A better translation of this is “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have already been bound in Heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in Heaven. In both instances of the same Lord’s charge to both Joshua and Peter He is saying the same thing. Mainly that He is giving them charge to administer the laws of God, which have already been established in heaven.

They need an earthly administrator who will be responsible for carrying out these orders. Neither is responsible to originating the moral order. God has already ordained that. He is appointing and intercessor to carry our out His orders for the Chosen. Today this is pastors and elders in the genuine Church.

Joshua was given this conditional charge that if he carried out the responsibilities of the High Priest with a love for God and His ordinances he would keep his position and have a place of access to Him which is the prayer closet and the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Further the High Priest is assured Heaven as his reward to be with the angelic host for his belief in the Messiah of God (*among these that stand by*) and full access to them while he is on earth.

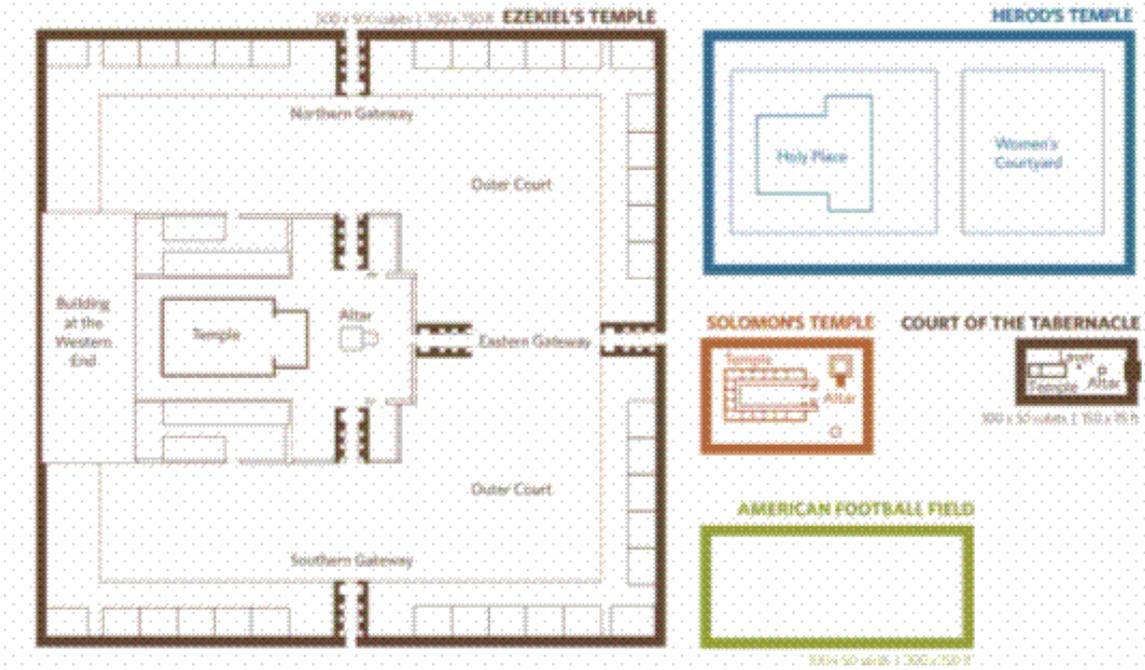




Photo from Israeli National Museum reconstruction of the Old City in Jerusalem



Photo from Israeli National Museum reconstruction of the Old City in Jerusalem



Aerial View of Temple Mount

THE BRANCH

Zechariah 3:8

⁸*Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch (ASV 1901).*

Now the Lord Himself gives Joshua an imperative command to listen to what He has to say, but does so in a very polite manner. For He uses the Hebrew word “*na*” which is a very polite way to say, “*if you please.*” He charges both Joshua and the priests (Kohen) who will be working with him to administer God’s justice and Law. *Thy fellows that sit before thee* indicates priests of lower rank. It was customary for pupils to sit before their masters when receiving advice or instruction from a senior person. (c.f. II Kings 4:38; Ezekiel 8:1; 14:1; 20:1; 33:31; Acts 22:3). The Hebrew expression **הַיֹּשֵׁבִים לְפָנָיִךָ** (*Hayoshveem lifnehcha*) makes reference to this arrangement. The Aaronic priests must “keep the charge of YHWH” lest they die (Leviticus 8:35: cf. 22:9). The new order of Millennial priests, are called the Zadokites. They will keep the charge entrusted to them (Ezekiel 44:16; 48:11). Nehemiah states that as late as his own time the Jews rejoiced that the priests and Levites had kept the charge of God, particularly with respect to purification (Nehemiah 12:45). This would change before the Second Temple period had expired (516 B.C.- AD 70). Later in this period the High Priests were no longer selected in the seed line of Aaron, Moses brother. Rather they were selected in a political manner and were beholding to their appointers and not to God Himself. Phannias ben Samuel (*Pinhas ben Shmuel*) was the last Jewish High Priest. He did not originate from a priestly family but was the leader of revolutionary forces. He died during the destruction of

Herod's Temple in AD 70.¹ These kohen are a sign or good omen that God will again bless His Chosen Israel. The restoration of regular Temple worship was meaningful in the national life of the returned exiles, and was seen as a sign that the coming of the Messiah was not far off.

This and the words, which immediately follow in the ninth verse, form a substantial Messianic passage of the Old Testament. It is a statement regarding the coming Redeemer in the “former prophets.” Thus, “My Servant” is the title of Messiah in the second half of the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 42:1; 44:6

“Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles. . . . It is a light thing that thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”

In Isaiah we find *Tsemach* first used as a title of Messiah by him in chapter four where, too, it stands in connection with the prophecy of the washing away of “*the filth of the daughter of Zion*” and the “*purging of the blood of Jerusalem from the midst of her,*” so that all that shall be left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, “*even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.*” Then Jeremiah, in chapters twenty three and thirty three, uses the term *Tsemakh Tsaddik*, “the Branch of Righteousness,” or “Righteous Branch,” as a designation of the Divine King who should come out of David’s line, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel dwell safely, and whose name shall be called *Jehovah Tsidkenu*.

Including, therefore, the prophecies of Zechariah, the Messiah are revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures by this title of *Tsemach* representing four different aspects of His character:

(1) *As the ideal King* who shall reign in righteousness—the Branch of David in whom shall be fulfilled all the promises made to the Davidic house (Jeremiah 23:5-6, 33:15-16).

(2) As “*My Servant the Branch*” (Zechariah 3:8).

(3) As “*The Man whose name is the Branch*” (Zechariah 6:12).

(4) As “*The Branch of Jehovah*” who in that day shall be “for beauty and for glory, . . . for excellency and comeliness to them that should be of the escaped in Israel” (Isaiah 4:2). The promised King—the Servant—the Man—the Branch, or Son of God.

¹ Josephus, *The Jewish War book IV*, Translated by William Whiston Hendrickson Publishers Peabody, MA Chapter 3 para 8, pg. 671

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Zechariah 3:9-10

⁹For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ¹⁰In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree (ASV 1901).

The Hebrew word for behold is heneh is intended to announce an event as imminent and sure to happen for God is declaring it. Later Zechariah 6:12-13 will declare that the Branch-Servant will be the builder of the Millennial Temple. Jesus the Messiah is known throughout Scripture as the Stone. Some examples are:

1. He is a stumbling stone and rock of offense (Psalm 118:22-23; Isaiah 8:13-15; Matthew 21:42; I Peter 2:7-8)
2. The Rock (Exodus 17:6, Matthew 16:18)
3. Chief Corner Stone (Ephesians 2:19-22).
4. A foundation or corner stone (Isaiah 28:16)

The reference to seven eyes on the stone speaks to the Messiah's complete and perfect intellect and omniscience. The engraving refers to the scars He bears from His scourging and crucifixion. His death and resurrection gave us eternal life and redemption for all who will believe. This book is written to Israel as a nation before the birth of the Church. Therefore, this vision is primarily directed to them. It also refers to the removal of Israel's iniquity, and their acceptance and reinstatement as Jehovah's priestly nation, will happen in the Theocratic Kingdom after the Great Tribulation. The "day," namely, of Israel's national repentance and great Day of Atonement, when the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out upon them, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. The Jews will not corporately confess their belief in the stone as their Messiah until they have been dragged through the persecution of Antichrist in the Great Tribulation.

The vine and the fig tree were commonly used as symbols of peace and prosperity, as in I Kings 4:25; II Kings 18:31; Micah 4:4. Another way of understanding this is to say, "each of you will invite his neighbor to come and enjoy peace and security, surrounded by your vineyards and fig trees. A more common way of expressing the last part of the verse might be to say; "each of you will invite your neighbor into your home to share your peace and prosperity"

NEXT WEEK: VISION FIVE: THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND AND TWO OLIVE TREES

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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