Zech 6:9-15 The Crowning of the Priest

This passage is a chiasm. A chiasm uses language in such a way that emphasizes and highlights a central them, that comes together at the middle of the x. In a chiasm a story is told in different ways to emphasize the same truth. This is what we see here. In v. 9 we see "the word of the Lord" coming to Zechariah. At the very end of our passage in v. 15 we also see the "word (voice) of the Lord. In v. 10 we see exiles coming from Babylon. In v. 14 we see those who are "far off" coming to help build the temple of the Lord. In v. 10b we see the exiles named. In v. 14 b we see the exiles name. In v. 11 a crown is made. In v. 14 a crown is put in the temple. In v. 11b we see Joshua the high priest. In v. 13 we see a priest by his throne. In v. 12 we see the idea (person) of the "branch" introduced. In v. 13 we see this branch with great majesty and rule and power. In v. 12b we see this "branch" will build the temple. And this is repeated in v. 13. So, both sides of the passage (especially in the Hebrew) join together forming an X, with an emphasis on the "branch." And He is the One who will build the temple.

And if we take the words of Zechariah as a whole, we find that the entire book is a chiasm. And the middle of the Book finds its emphasis here, today. It is about this "branch" which is also translated as "shoot." It can even be translated as "stump." And this "branch" is the one who will build the temple of God. This is Zechariah's point! And, as look back upon all the prophets, they all make the same point. So, I have two questions: Who is this branch? And, What did he come to do? And, how we answer these questions and respond in application is of vital importance to us as we take the Lord's Supper today.

1. Who is Zechariah's branch? This would have been very intriguing and interesting in their context. As the Jews were coming back to Jerusalem, who was the one in charge for rebuilding the temple? In Zechariah's earlier visions, who is this person? In 4:9 we read: "**The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house**." And in 4:10 it is Zerubbabel who holds the "***plumb line***" for the rebuilding. He is the governor, and plays the role of a king. And this would have been understood in their context. After all, this is what King David (in his mind) and King Solomon did. It is the king who has the power, the money, the authority to get such things done. But, in vv. 12-13, it is not Zerubbabel. It is the One called the "branch." Who is this "branch." We know immediately (as did Zechariah) that this word is picture of a person.

This "branch," also "shoot," or "stump," is not new to Zechariah. He knew this person would come! He is simply repeating what other prophets before him had said. One of the major themes of OT prophecy is the fact that the Kingdom of David will stand forever (2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5). And this kingdom will be established by one called the "branch." One example is Isaiah. He preaches near the end of the Southern Kingdom's fall. And he knows of the coming judgment. But, in Is. 4:2-3 he speaks of another day in the future. He says, "**In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem** . . ." Also Jeremiah says,

"**Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness**" (Jer. 23:5-6).

Now, looking back, we know that David's kingdom would eventually fall. I imagine many of the Jews in exile would have been thinking, "*All hope is not gone. We are going back to Jerusalem. We will rebuild the temple. And, we have many from David's line. Let's get our king back and rebuild. Maybe God's promise is not lost. Maybe this "branch" is with us. Maybe it is Zerubbabel*." (And, the same can be said of some of the Jews today. As their temple was destroyed again in 70 AD. Some are looking for their "messianic" king to come and rebuild again. Many are looking for this "branch," this king from David's line.)

But, there is something very important in our text indicate this "branch" is not merely a king. He is more. He is also a priest. This is SOOOO important for us. This is where we as Christians depart from our Jewish friends. We agree that a king will come and rule David's throne. BUT, this king will also be a priest. And this truth establishes the great promise of God before the foundations of the world. This truth establishes the Gospel in which we believe. Upon this truth lays the uniting of heaven and earth. This is the Mount Everest of truths that establishes Christianity above all the other religions of the world. Jesus is both KING and PRIEST. And He is the branch to which this passage finds fulfillment.

Let's look at the text closer. In our passage, apparently there are exiles coming from Babylon. Their names are found in v. 10 and v. 14 (I believe they are the same folks with different names.). And they are coming from Babylon with great wealth; they have silver and gold. And with some of this silver and gold, they are told to make a crown and Zechariah must put it on the head of Joshua, the high priest (v. 11). And then, after putting it on his head, they were to place this crown in the new temple being built as a memorial (v. 14).

Wow! What an event! Though it were only a memorial, we see the uniting of royalty with that of the priesthood. Now, this doesn't happen as Israel rebuilds the temple. The priests would continue to do their work separately. And those who rule would do the same. But, this crown will be placed in the temple as a memorial. And though Zechariah did not know everything, by faith, he looked forward to this "branch" to the One who would rise up as David's king and, in some way he would also be a priest. And I believe the "remnant" in that day, by faith, would have seen this picture. Let me read vv. 12-13 again: "**Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, andhe 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**." Who is this man? It is the Lord Jesus!

Question: Do we see this pictured in the Bible? Do we see both a king and a priest in one person? What about Adam? He was the first king with dominion. He was also the priest of God's temple, the Garden of Eden. What about Moses? He was a ruler, the "king" of God's people coming out of Egypt. He was also their priest as he went between God and the people. Anyone else? What about Melchizedek? He was the king/priest of Salem. All of these picture what Zechariah is saying will happen one day. There will be a king, who is also a priest. And what will He do? This brings us to our next truth.

2. What did He come to do? Brothers and sisters, all the volumes of the books of this world cannot exhaust the answer to this question! The obvious answer is what we've been talking about week after week through these visions. The Branch will build the Temple of the Lord. And he is not talking about a physical building in Jerusalem. If you think this is all the Messiah is coming to do, you've missed the entire truth of the Bible, the hinge upon which everything holds together. With the uniting of king and priest, we see the uniting of heaven and earth. And in this comes peace, and ultimately, the uniting of all things.Look closely at v. 13 again: "**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**."

Brothers and sisters, in Christ we have the uniting of king and priest. The KING has come down to earth. In a manner of speaking, He left his throne. Look with me Phil. 2:6-7 say: "**though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men**." The King left his glory to come and "ransom" his subjects from sure death. This is us! For the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23). Our king, took on flesh. He gave up the beautiful clothing of heaven and took on our humble clothing. Then, He lived a sinless life. No one can say that since the fall of Adam. All the requirements of heaven, he has fulfilled. All the requirements handed down to Adam in God's holiness and righteousness are fulfilled in God's branch. And, at the right time, He laid down his life on the cross. At this point, his function was not a priest in all his priestly clothing, but instead he became the lamb to be slaughtered. And He was! And his "blood" was the price paid for the sins of his people. And by his blood, our sins are taken away.

Let me ask, "Where was this blood applied?" It was applied, not in the temple made with human hands in Jerusalem, but was applied in the real, the true Holy of Holies in heaven. And, on the third day, what happened? He rose again! He conquered death and the grave! Brothers and sisters there is nothing or no one our king did not conquer to save us. And, there is no sin our priest left behind in his atonement! And now, look at v. 13 "**And the counsel of peace shall be between them both**." This is the uniting of king and priest! This is the BRANCH!

I think back to Jesus' trip down the Mount of Olives in his day as he came to "HIS" temple. I believe the same crown of Zechariah's day was there. Why not? He came to receive the crown; the rightful owner of that crown placed on Joshua's head. (And what was his name: Joshua =

Yeshua, How ironic). But, he did not receive such a crown on earth. Instead, he received a crown of thorns and a sarcastic sign that said "*King of the Jews*." This is what we remember today! Who do we worship? We worship the Lord Jesus Christ! Why? "**After making purification for sins . . . he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high**" (Heb. 1:3).

So what does this mean for us? Well, the Lord's Supper is OUR memorial. We remember his death. But, we do this for how long? "*Until he comes*." Our king has come. His kingdom has been inaugurated. He sits on his throne. And we have already come to the heavenly city (Heb. 12:22). But, He will come back and consummate his kingdom. There will be a final uniting of heaven and earth (Col. 1:20). Brothers and sisters, today, our memorial is the Lord's Supper. And we will do this together until he comes again. With this in mind, let me read from Eph. 1-3 as Paul applies this same truth that Zechariah preached to the exiles in Jerusalem.

Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, "in Christ." Paul is saying, "not in the things of this world, not in the systems of worship from the old covenant, not in the kings of this world, not in the priests and false worship found in other religions, but in "Christ." This is why we sing: "In Christ Alone!" So, back to our questions: Who is the branch? What did he come to do?

Who do you say he is? If you are a non-Christian, you may have lots of thoughts on who he really is. But as Christians, we say, "Jesus is the Son of God. And as the Son of God he is the King of heaven and earth. And as the King, he is also the priest, the One who has entered the true Holy of Holies. He is the Lord. He is the Priest, ALL in one."