

Post-Exile Prophets: Zechariah
CROWNING OF JOSHUA

Thursday, July 3

Reading: Zechariah 6:9-15

Zechariah 6:11 *Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak. 12 Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the Man whose name is the Branch...*

Awakened from his nighttime visions, the Lord now gives Zechariah a symbolic act to perform. Three Jewish men had recently arrived as representatives of the Jewish exiles who had remained in Babylon. They had brought a gift of silver and gold from these exiles for the construction of the temple. The prophet was to take these precious metals and have them made into a royal crown. Zechariah was then to take this crown and place it on the head of the high priest Joshua.

What is strange about this action is that God had purposefully separated the offices of king and priest. The high priest was not to rule like a king and the king was not to take the role of a priest. Several kings were severely punished when they tried to do so (see Saul – 1 Samuel 13 and Uzziah – 2 Chronicles 26). The Persian-appointed governor Zerubbabel was from the royal line of David, but to put a crown on his head would have made their Persian rulers suspicious of rebellion.

This crown was not really meant for Joshua or Zerubbabel. It was a symbol of the coming Messiah – the Branch, who would unify the offices of king and priest in one Person (more on this in tomorrow's devotion). After this symbolic crowning, the crown was to be placed in the temple "as a memorial." It would be a reminder of God's promise to one day send the Messiah who would fulfill all that Zechariah had seen in his night visions and all he will see in the remaining chapters of this book.

The final call is not just for the Jewish remnant struggling to rebuild, but also for "those who are far away." This likely refers to the Jewish people still living outside of Promised Land and also the Gentiles who would come to know and worship the Lord. They too would help build the future temple of the Lord, just as Zechariah's partner in ministry Haggai had said (Haggai 2:6-9). The need for obedience concludes this first series of messages. "This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God" (6:15).

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul uses this imagery to picture the unity of the Church – both Jews and Gentiles – through Christ.

Ephesians 2:12 Remember that at that time you [Gentiles] were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one...17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household

How has Jesus' sacrifice affected your relationship with God? With fellow believers? What does it mean to be 'fellow citizens' and 'members of God's family'? How should this change the way you live your life?